

Sourcing Holy Wisdom: Through Sermons and Meditations



by
Leigh Dean

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Dedication



To all of you who have shown me great Love, have accepted me just as I am and have—with deep faith and gratitude—received my many forms of unconditional gifting, I bless you and thank you.



Sourcing Holy Wisdom: Through Sermons and Meditations

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Sermons

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Meditations

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Prologue

It's difficult for us humans here on planet earth to wrap our minds around the concept that there are **no time limits** to the unfolding of a Divine Plan.

Case in point: In 2005, Holy Wisdom—the feminine aspect of the Holy Trinity—suggested I write a book about what I had learned concerning the ways in which the realm of **Spirit** works and the immutable **laws** that govern that realm.

I had no idea where to begin. I had no idea how to go about writing such a book. At that moment in time, I had **no** passion for choosing just the right words and stringing them together to make pleasing sentences. I **had** a passion for choosing bones, pieces of driftwood, organic beads and stringing them together to create necklaces-of-power that I wore, proudly, around my neck. But sourcing Holy Wisdom and putting together—with Her help—a book from my highest self? I was not prepared to pick up that challenge.



As I turn 80, I have a clearer sense of Spirit's immutable **laws** and what Holy Wisdom wishes me to convey to you.

Holy Wisdom wants us—to the best of our limited ability—to live by the immutable **Laws of Spirit** here in Earthly Matter.

To help achieve this goal Holy Wisdom has given us—in every language spoken, signed and pictured—some important words we are to turn into positive action!

Love: We are to Love one another. This is **not** your everyday **Love**. This is Jesus **Love**; this is Mohammed Ali **Love**.

(I get a chuckle out of each of these tasks. Superficially, this concept of “loving one another”—and the rest of the nouns we’re tasked with doing—seems simple enough. But have we actually and consistently succeeded in doing any of them?)

Truth: **We are to Tell the Truth**—especially to ourselves and especially to human agencies that foster greed and an unhealthy use of power.

Faith: **We are to have Faith**—meaning, it is our **Faith** and the practice of **going within** and meditating that will bring us to the **Cosmic Source of Life**; an energy far wiser, far more loving and far more powerful than any energy here on Earth. **We are to faithfully Serve this Source**. It is our **Faith** and this **Source** that will give humankind the courage to make the necessary decisions to make Earth healthy and to bring abundance to all.

Good and Evil: **We are to recognize** that there is **Good** and there is **Evil**—most of us carry a little of both within us. **We are to Wrap Ourselves in Goodness**, daily, by **Counting our Blessings**.

When **Evil** presents itself **We are NOT to confront Evil with Force**. We are to **confront Evil with Love**. We may be fearful. We may feel we are alone in the face of **Evil**. But we are **never alone**.

Trust: **We are to Trust** that the energy of **Holy Spirit is With Us and In Us**, always.

Forgiveness: **We are to Forgive** those who have wronged us, slightly or gravely. They will reap what they have sown. Do **not** harbor **Hate**.

Acknowledgment: **We are to Acknowledge all Acts-of-Compassion** that we have experienced or witnessed. **We are to Acknowledge even the smallest Steps-of-Spiritual-Growth** in our self and in others. Holy Wisdom knows we humans crave reassurance, validation and praise.



Gratitude: We are to fill every cell in our being with thoughts of **Gratitude**. We are to be **Grateful for Life** for even the harshest life is a blessing because this **Earth** is a mighty **Spiritual Classroom**, offering us many **Truth-filled Holy-Wisdom Lessons**.

Rejoice: We are to **Rejoice** because when we have learned even the most modest spiritual life-lesson the Heavens **Rejoice** and we are rewarded. What is our reward? Our reward is the pleasure of having refined enough to graduate from one spiritual classroom into the challenges of the next spiritual classroom.

Thankfulness: We are to always **Give Thanks, Give Thanks, Give Thanks**—especially to those who have truly seen us and honored us.

Crying: We are to give ourselves permission to **Cry**. We are to bless our **tears** for **Tears** are Holy Wisdom's cleansing agent. They bathe the Soul and they bathe the cells in our body, washing away the dark energies of anger, arrogance, bitterness, judgment, hatred, envy, sorrow, self-pity, self-loathing and fear.

Laughter: We are to **Embrace Laughter**. (*We earthlings frequently tickle God's funny-bone. Can you imagine why?*) Holy Wisdom invites us to **Laugh until we Cry**. Remember: **Tears-of-Joy** are equally as healing as **Tears-of-Sorrow**.

Practice What We Preach: We are To Do what we say we are going to **do** unlike the saying, "Do as I say not as I do." (*This is a **Truth** especially for parents who need to role-model appropriate social behavior.*) It is oh-so-much-easier to talk about doing than it is to get-down-and-dirty and **do** the hard, never-ending spiritual work on the **Self**.

Remain Mindful of Earth: We are to **Love Mother Nature, to Praise Mother Nature, to Honor Mother Nature and We are to be Wise Care-Takers of Planet Earth**. It is essential that we be mindful of Earth during chaotic and violent times.

Planet Earth brought us forth. **She** nourished us with **Her** bounty and with **Her** beauty and **She** will welcome us back into **Herself** when our bodies die to **Matter** and our **Souls** return to **Spirit**.



And it came to pass in **Divine Time**—in the year 2016—and in **Divine Order** that a young woman, whom I am mentoring, was asked by her place-of-worship, to deliver the Message during one of their Sunday evening services.

(In today's texting lingo, I learned to my dismay that a Holy Reverberation—the Message—is called a “Reverb!” I've since learned that studio musicians have always used “reverb” as short-hand for “reverberation.”)

As for me, I think congregations in places-of-worship deserve to hear vocabulary chosen-with-care that complements the language found in whatever holy book they read and study.)

However, it was **not** the verbiage that moved me to action, it was the fact that she had written and delivered this Reverberation that suddenly triggered a memory that two decades ago, I had delivered a number of sermons and meditations at several churches in the Seattle area.

It took some hunting through old computer folders and rummaging around in various long-forgotten files, but when I finally read what I had written back then, I realized I had struck spiritual gold. This book, with much editing and updates, finally fulfills Holy Wisdom's earlier suggestion which—for those of you who serve the Light will understand—was a holy command.



RECOGNIZING GOD-PLANS & GOD-PATTERNS

May the words from my mouth and the thoughts from my heart-mind-and-spirit be acceptable to you this morning at New Age Christian Church & School. **Amen.**

I've spent the summer wrestling with words; words for the book reviews I write, words for long-overdue letters to friends, words for a book I'm writing. I haven't written, seriously, for more than a year. And my writing skills have rusted in the Seattle rain. God knows I've been otherwise occupied, but the time for writing has returned, and since writing is one of the ways I serve Holy Wisdom, the scheduling-angels are throwing plenty of opportunities in my path.

Preparing this message for today has been very helpful in removing rust. And the threat of publicly humiliating myself has given me the incentive I needed to sit down, pull my scattered thoughts together into some sort of order and write these thoughts down on paper so that I can read them aloud and share them with you this morning.

A long time ago, I became mesmerized by magical coincidences—such as picking up the phone and *before* dialing the person you wanted to reach is there on the other end of the line!

About fifty-five years ago I stopped calling these unexplainable events “coincidences.”

In late November of 1960, I walked into the Flatiron building and into my own God-Plan—though I hadn't a clue at the time. In the offices of The Children's Book Council, I met a most congenial woman. When I told her I wanted to write and edit children's books, she sent me off to the Doubleday Bookstore located on

Fifth Avenue in the same building that housed Lord & Taylor. It turned out the best man at their recent wedding was the manager of this bookstore. Christmas was fast approaching and he would need extra staff. “It’ll be a good place,” she said, “for you to get your feet wet in the world of children’s books.” She was right. And it was also a good job to add to my work résumé which read: “camp counselor, dog-trainer and actress!”

My father’s only contact with the publishing world was James Finan—one of the writers at *Reader’s Digest* magazine. And Jim knew just the person for me to see if I wanted to write and edit children’s books. Her name was Helene C. Frye and she was the Editor-in-Chief of Whittlesey House at McGraw-Hill. This was January of 1961.

It was a most curious path, this path-of-willing-strangers who so kindly led me to McGraw-Hill and, yet, my arrival at McGraw-Hill was also perfectly timed. The department needed an “editorial assistant”—the first rung on the ladder to becoming an editor—and I was hired!

That’s when I had my God-Plan epiphany. It suddenly occurred to me that this was **not** the way things worked on Earth. It **was** the way other-worldly energies—that had been helping me since birth—worked. *Oh, my God*, I thought to myself. *Yes, yes, yes! And thank you!* God and Holy Wisdom had most definitely orchestrated this entire path of providential connections.

Now, during times of upheaval in my life I pray, fervently, for the signs Holy Wisdom sends me and that I follow—with faith and trust—to wherever they lead. To my delight, they always lead to a new life-fulfilling, financially rewarding enterprise, which suits all my skillsets to perfection. I call these “coincidences” God-Plans and the way in which they unfold, God-Patterns.

In his book, *Celestine Prophecy*, James Redfield talks about a time-to-come when a critical mass of people on planet Earth will recognize “coincidences” as Divine Patterns. And that’s what I’d like to talk about this morning: The Patterns

of God-Plans and their accompanying classrooms that Holy Wisdom creates to help us find our way as we work to refine our earthly selves.

Actually, I'm standing at this podium in the midst of a realized God-Plan—my overseeing and financing the renovation of this church. It has been a demanding challenge and a labor of love. With so many of you lending your time and energy, we've brought our church—which was built in 1890 in Seattle and is the oldest church that has been continuously used as a House-of-God—forward into a renewed Light.

The first week in August, Reverend Bernie Kaufmann spoke about “manifestation” as the act of making the invisible visible. And isn’t that what we’ve done here in this sanctuary? We’ve made God’s luminous Light visible for everyone to see, no matter what their religious traditions and beliefs are or where in their spiritual journey they may be.

That I arrived in Seattle two years ago from Brooklyn, New York and live just eight blocks away is part of a much larger on-going God-Plan. God-Plans are, in fact, far more complicated than “rocket science.” You’ll see what I mean as I share the plans that have already unfolded and that keep unfolding in my life.

Now, even though August is lay-speakers’ month, we still have our monthly “Seed Thought.” And the seed thought for August is **Prosperity**. These seed thoughts don’t come from Earth-Mind; they come directly from God-Mind. They are channeled to us and are posted on our outdoor reader board—with a brief uplifting comment—so that the essence of their meaning may be contemplated by those who pass by this church.

Nothing is an accident. Everything has a purpose. But it’s my belief that unless we are in God’s Mind, which is everlastingly **with** us and **in** us, we can’t fully respond positively to life’s challenges and we certainly can’t prosper.

All of you here this morning know these Truths. Many of you have spent this lifetime reviewing and striving to live by God’s immutable Laws—so, let’s review.

In Earth-Mind we set goals based on winning and losing, succeeding and failing. In Earth-Mind, there is great fear of Not-Having-Enough: money, food, clothes, shelter. This sort of Mind-Set does not believe in unlimited abundance; it holds fiercely to a belief in scarcity. In our very earthy minds, who among us hasn't been touched by the tendrils of greed, lust, envy, power and ambition that try, constantly, to attach themselves to us?

When push-comes-to-shove, our loyalty is **not** to God but to the seductive illusions our Earth-Mind manifests.

I've always found it enlightening and disheartening to learn that a person who has plenty of money, is in superb physical shape, lives in a beautiful home, is driven in or drives an elegant car, wears expensive clothes, never worries about gaining weight when he or she eats their way through meal-after-succulent-meal can, at the same time, be miserable and wish to be dead.

Clearly our Earth-Mind, the only mind we think we can trust, is truly limited. Could this be why, when we witness something amazing, we call it "weird"? *A Course in Miracles* calls these strange, hard-to-believe happenings "miracles!" I call them God-Plans.

The thing is, it's **not** possible to recognize or to fully understand or to fully participate in these God-Plans using our Earth-Mind alone. To make sense of a God-Plan, to appreciate a God-Plan, to surrender to a God-Plan, each one of us has to be **in** God's Mind.

The electrical conduits of God-Mind and of Earth-Mind do **not** meet; there is no convergence. When we are in God-Mind, the purpose of our lives on the Earth plane is clear. We know, with an unshakable faith, that we are souls, forever, that we **are** children-of-God and that we are specks of the same Light generated by **One Almighty Source**.

But in Earth-Mind our true natures often become twisted beyond recognition by unresolved past-life issues and by the challenges of our present life, leaving us so deeply wounded and confused, we forget who we truly are and we forget the

contract we made with God while we were in the realm of Spirit before we reincarnated into Matter.

You know it was a blessing when I was nine-years-old and the highest score I could achieve on an I.Q. test was 80. Naturally, I was judged retarded—this was back in the 1940s when dyslexia was as yet unknown. But this designation of “retarded” saved me at a very impressionable age from ever thinking that being “smart” would automatically make me successful and popular or that being “smart” would make me powerful and clever enough to rule the world—although my on-going issues of arrogance and control, I’m sure, had me thinking I could. Really? **No!**

Unknown to me, I was under the protection of Holy Wisdom and I was being taught, primarily, in Her often arduous classroom, answerable to Her and **not** to the academies rooted in Earth-Mind.

*And, now, I invite you to **close your eyes** . . . take several deep breaths . . . exhale each breath with a **whoosh** . . . and as you feel heavenly Light pouring into every cell of your body, open your mind to God and let your Highest Mind merge with His Mind.*

*As you sit in His **Light**, embraced by the presence of Holy Wisdom, **open your eyes**, slowly, and from that still place **within** you, **listen**.*



There are big God-Plans and there are little God-Plans. There are God-Plans that take years to unfold. And there are God-Plans that happen in seconds.

One of God's most memorable earthly gifts was to endow Paleolithic humans with the ability to create master-works of complex, colorful animal

paintings on the rocky walls of caves. Artists who contributed to these paintings—in fact the entire clan—left behind personal signatures by blowing paint on to the backs of their hands. The silhouette of their handprints and their exquisite art can still be seen today, on hundreds of cave walls, as fresh as the day they were first painted.

And this God-Plan, like all God-Plans, shares a series of immutable laws:

1. God-Plans meet an unwavering standard: They must be for the greatest good of all.
2. God-Plans are executed with love, with excellence and with an absence of self-centered Ego.
3. God-Plans don't financially bankrupt anyone. Money is provided, unconditionally.
4. God-Plans unfold smoothly in perfect time and in perfect order. (Any glitches are due to human error, not to God's error!)
5. God-Plans, on Earth, honor Nature. (*When this church was built the God-Plan for this room honored the wood of huge, centuries-old, first-growth fir trees that were cut down and milled in Ballard to make our sanctuary floor, the pews, and this beautiful step to the podium.*)
6. God-Plans need willing humans and the loving participation of energies from the Spirit-world to have them unfold successfully.



I don't think there is a person here that hasn't experienced a God-Plan. Wouldn't life be a whole lot easier if we lived every moment of every day within a God-Plan? This is not wishful thinking and we don't have to be bodhisattvas or

saints. **What we need to do is surrender our Will to God's Will as our single most important act of Free Will.**

This is how the Findhorn community in Scotland—located on a salt-water, wind-lashed, seaside spit of land—became a vegetable and fruit-tree Eden. All it took to realize this magnificent model of a God-Plan were three ordinary people—well, not so ordinary. They were Peter Caddy, Eileen Caddy and Dorothy Maclean. Together, they chose to listen to God and to be taught by Mother Nature's plant Devas.

Do you know that every plant and every tree has a Conscious spirit called a Deva?

It's when we don't seize a heaven-sent opportunity when it's offered or when we aren't willing to listen or when we resist change or when we try to second-guess the path that Holy Wisdom needs us to take for us to reach our full potential that a special sort of God-Pattern occurs. Usually, this God-Pattern begins with a series of unexpected events designed-with-love to guide us back to our true selves and our true life path.



The Emptying Pattern is an especially alarming wake-up call. This pattern takes place when all sorts of heaven-sent signs and signals, including gentle celestial nudges, minor physical discomforts, helpful advice from friends and loved-ones are denied or ignored. That's when The Celestial Speed-Up Crew—those spiritual entities-of-energy who've signed on to help advance God-Consciousness on Earth—get busy. It's not a gentle or a pleasant process.

Back in Brooklyn Heights in 1990 my friend, Charles, was emptied. Charles had always been drawn to a godly life. God had blessed him with a beautiful

baritone voice and he'd sung in church choirs since the age of nine—he's now sixty-four. He's a gentle, funny, generous, loving person, but his fear of not having enough money and his chosen daily life of rigid routines were keeping him from the deep spiritual life for which he longed.

Enter The Celestial Speed-Up Crew. First, Charles lost \$180,000—his entire life savings. A mortgage-funding company he'd invested in because the dividend pay-offs were exceedingly high, declared bankruptcy. What none of the investors knew was that every mortgage was being sold to multiple buyers. This particular mortgage-funding company was operating a gigantic Ponzi scheme! (*A cautionary note: If the yield of a speculative investment is unusually high, beware.*)

Then one year later, as he was entering Key Foods supermarket at 6:15 on a February evening the huge metal security gate, with age-related defects, came crashing down on the base of his skull. Seriously injured, unable to earn a living and his nest-egg gone, Charles's worst nightmare had come true.

I was walking along a street I rarely walked along in Brooklyn Heights when I saw this familiar figure coming toward me—walking with a cane. It was Charles. I hadn't seen him in several years.

“Charles, what happened to you?” I asked. And there, standing on the sidewalk his back leaning against a ginkgo tree, he told me his story to which I made this outrageous reply, “Why, Charles, that's wonderful! Don't you see? You've been emptied.” Charles looked appalled. “Please don't be afraid,” I reassured him. “God will **not** leave you comfortless. His Plan will take time to unfold. But Charles, the life you've always wanted, the life that will make you feel useful and safe, will come to pass.”

He said, “Do you really think so?”

Of course, Charles hadn't seen his worst nightmare as a way of making a life-long dream come true. Would any of us? In fact, he told me he'd been considering suicide. However, before he took any action he wanted to talk to me. And here we were, talking.

“Are you sure, Leigh?” he asked, again.

“Of course,” I said. “This is a God-Plan. Key Foods will have to pay, eventually. You’ll find the perfect lawyer and Key Foods’ monetary settlement will more than make up the \$180,000 you lost. Your body will heal and you’ll be able to spend your days walking in the world doing the good works you love to do.”

All Charles could muster those 25-years ago was a tentative, “Really?”

“Yes, really and truly.” And I watched his pale face regain some color and a smile appear that turned his look-of-despair into a look-of-hope.

It was then that the lyrics of a Rodgers & Hammerstein song popped into my head and I sang-out, “**Im-possible things are happening e-very day!**” Charles laughed. I hugged him and continued, “But first, Charles, you have to learn to bend like a willow and to truly trust. When you learn to get quiet and open your heart and mind to the Light, we’ll talk to God and when he gives us instructions we’ll do exactly as he says.”

We worked together a little over a year, once a week, for an hour-and-a-half. Charles practiced every day on his own. Whenever he felt overwhelmed with medical worries or money worries or family problems, he’d get quiet, enter into the Light and ask God to show him the way.

Meanwhile, I was looking for a choir closer to home. Charles introduced me to the choir director of The Brooklyn Oratory at St. Boniface Catholic Church. I sang for Dennis Delaney and he accepted me, warmly, telling me I had a special gift for ecstatic singing. It felt so good to have my voice appreciated by someone who had heard many, many amazing voices sing.

Thereafter, Charles and I walked together to St. Boniface early Sunday mornings to make sweet music in the choir. The Brooklyn Oratory even managed to professionally record *Glad Tidings: Christmas at the Oratory*, during a steamy hot day in late May of 1993. It was a momentous year full of positive change for many of the choir members.

It was an especially momentous year for Charles. Key Foods—because of the tenacity of a very smart lawyer—reached a most equitable compensatory settlement with Charles.

And, because Charles had stayed distant-but-available and always generous to the dysfunctional as well as the aging members of his extended family, he was now viewed by this mistrusting group as the only one who was intelligent, discrete and could be trusted. Accordingly, Charles became the executor of their individual estates and a beneficiary in their Wills.



It was a momentous year for me, too. In that same month-of-May, 1993, Holy Wisdom called me to Seattle. I'd never been to Seattle. I'd never been to the State of Washington.

After 34-years, the crowds and the never-ceasing energy of the Precambrian granite upon which Manhattan was built and the sorrowful energies emanating from Native-American farmlands long buried under the soil of Brooklyn Heights exhausted me every time I stepped outside my apartment.



I arrived in Seattle on June 22nd, 1993 and bought my tall skinny house the very next day. And another piece of God's Plan for me in Seattle began to unfold.

During our initial drive-around to look at houses, Jim Sluga, the realtor who sold me my Ballard home, and I found we had an amazing life connection.

Back in June of 1959 when I graduated from The University of Wisconsin in Madison, Jim was in his mother's womb. His mother, Jan, was a stay-at-home-mom. And Everett, Jim's dad, spent his days painting the interiors and exteriors of all the campus buildings.

Jim's dad had a deep gentle spirit and over the years we'd had quite a few philosophical conversations, Ev and I. Can you imagine that?

From the moment of our first meeting, June 23rd of 1993, Jim and I have been best-buddies. Who would have imagined I would find such a loving kindred spirit. We humans most often look in amazement at a God-Plan only **after** it has unfolded!

Now, here it is, August of 1995 and the 30th of this month will mark the beginning of my 3rd year in the Northwest. It has been an extraordinary three years for me **and** for Charles. Back in Brooklyn, Time, God's guidance and Charles's willingness to be open to accepting the challenges and rewards of this remarkable God-Plan had gone far toward making him whole.

Today he walks in the world without a cane, doing a variety of charity and churchly tasks—one of which is polishing silver. Charles loves to polish silver! And as he polishes the church chalices and cups he is struck dumb by the unimaginable ways in which his God-Plan has unfolded. (Indeed, in the year 2016, at the age of 84, Charles' life in Santa Fe, New Mexico is a daily joy.)



There is another God-Pattern; it's less harsh than The Emptying Pattern. I call this one **The Closing-Door Pattern**. I see heads nodding.

Sometimes when we know it's time to make a change the fear-of-change holds us hostage. But God works on many levels and Holy Wisdom teases our creative subconscious into devising plans to get us unstuck.

I found this out when I requested a pay raise back in the fall of 1972 when I was a Fiction Editor in the Junior Book Department at McGraw-Hill. It was a time when the bloated publishing industry was going through drastic down-sizing with mega lay-offs.

Naturally, I was shocked on December 5th to find a “pink slip” in my Inbox. I’d been at McGraw-Hill ten years and Holy Wisdom knew the time had come for me to make a change but I was scared. I loved my job and I was doing good work in the world.

However, while in Spirit I’d make a contract with God. (*This precious gift-of-life comes with conditions. We are asked by Holy Wisdom if we are willing to continue to refine by doing some hard spiritual work to dissolve old issues and to resolve some Karmic debts. We make these pledges while we are still in the Spirit realm and **before** we reincarnate. Incidentally, we also choose our parents. But these pledges and choices often get forgotten once we enter Matter.*)

While in Spirit, I had contracted to practice being an agent-for-change which meant my time at McGraw-Hill as an employee had come to an end. Over. Finished. Done.

Nevertheless I was devastated. (*I did not know, at that time, that I would be kept on for several more years—as a free-lance editor—to bring to publication the books of my already contracted avant-garde authors and artists.*)

What happened to me next, after being made redundant, is worth noting. Over the years, I had developed a reputation in the industry as an editor who specialized in discovering, sponsoring and publishing picture books by first-time authors and artists.

Their portfolios—these artists often came directly from Cooper Union School of Art—were wildly inventive and the texts of their stories revealed a fresh, out-of-the-box kind of thinking that pre-schoolers and elementary school children in the late 1960s and early 1970s would delight-in and fully understand.

Plainly put: For the hard-hit economy of the publishing industry at that time—it takes lots of invested capital when you publish a previously unknown talent—I was a luxury the book business could not afford.

I took my distinctive collection of picture books on job interviews to half-a-dozen Senior Editors at top-of-the-line houses. Our meetings were always animated and cordial, but all the openings for an “Editor” were closed to me. And they would remain closed. What was I to do?

A soothing, familiar voice inside my head said: *Why not teach?* And I asked myself, *Why not?* After all that’s what I’d been doing as an Editor.

I was an alchemistic editor. Synergistically, when they came to my office, the authors and artists in my talent pool and I would come up with possible book ideas. Then, I’d give them—one by one—my infamous ninety-minute crash course (“Take notes, please.”) in “How to Write a Picture Book” if you were an artist who could write or “How to Illustrate a Picture Book” if you were an author who could draw or “How to Write and Illustrate a Picture Book” if you could both write and draw.

It must have seemed exceedingly cavalier to these hopeful young people when, at the end of ninety minutes I’d stand up, shake hands, wish them well and make an appointment six months down the road for them to bring in a rough draft of their first picture book! More than twenty picture books, by first-time authors and artists, were published during my tenure at McGraw-Hill.

*Well, I thought, in my less hysterical moments, maybe I could teach a course. I could call it **Writing Books for Children**. Maybe I could teach another course called: **Children’s Book Publishing**.* These two courses—and four other courses I went on to develop and teach—were really a step-by-step dissection of the creative process. And any creative process, I believe, is about bringing-to-life and refining the dreams of the soul.

Though I had only a basic 1959 Bachelor-of-Science degree, the doors to academia swung open and at the graduate level, no less. Of course I had years of

life-experience as a fiction editor and I was a published author. Still, it was an astonishing heaven-sent coup!

For five years I taught at various universities and colleges in New York and Connecticut. And by-the-way I earned more money in a few months of free-lance teaching than I had earned working a full year at McGraw-Hill.

Then, the doors to academia closed and the doors to Spiritual Healing opened.



A seemingly benign God-Pattern is **The Weed-and-Simplify Pattern**. This Pattern inspires us to clean out the clutter from our attics, closets, files, garages and our lives. From time-to-time we need to make room for “the new.” If we don’t make room, new creative energies with life-changing potential for our betterment won’t have the space they need to enter our lives.

When Holy Wisdom encourages us to untangle ourselves from destructive relationships and toxic work places, this clutter of the emotional and psychic kind, tends to send us into panic mode.

I suspect we know that clearing away this kind of debris will require us to do some honest-to-God soul-searching and some difficult truth-telling to ourselves.

I know when this happens to me; I’m off like a shot to any number of reputable phenomenologists be they Tarot Card Readers, Astrologers, Aura Readers, Psychics, etc. I do all this running around because I don’t have faith in my own ability to enter God-Mind. I don’t trust that the answers I receive will **actually** be coming from Holy Wisdom.

None of us wants to be wrong. None of us wants to be unpleasantly surprised. Finally, when I am worn down by doubt and fear, the still small voice I’ve been yearning to hear, whispers: *Look within.*

Looking **within** is a very good way to reconnect with God-Mind and to strengthen our faith in the reality of a transcendent Source.

And if you have not done so already it's a good time to begin the practice of a compatible form of meditation. Here's what I know: "Silence and Stillness make the kind of soil in which inner peace can grow."



The most fatiguing and ridiculous God-Pattern is **The Pattern-of-Overload**. A young woman came to see me shortly before I left Brooklyn. She said: "I'm getting married next month, both my parents are old and sick and may have to go into a Nursing Home and the funds for this are tied up in a legal battle with the dentist who bought my father's practice. Oh, and I'm a cellist and my husband-to-be and I manage a small chamber music group and we're supposed to give a concert in Europe next week." To which I gave a snort of glee and said: "Wow, you're in the vortex of Overload!"

There is a specific purpose to this particular God-Pattern. We are to use our Free Will to logically prioritize. In the current climate of Earthly chaos Holy Wisdom often finds it necessary to step to one side and watch as we enmesh ourselves in impossible "to do" lists. Then, She chuckles—with great compassion—and wakes us up to the reality that we are **not** expected to, nor are we able, to be all things to all people in all situations and to meet dozens of calendar commitments, all at once! We need to be reminded, constantly, how little our Earth-Mind comprehends the ways in which God and His emissaries work so tirelessly to help us live our lives in Divine Time and in Divine Order.

After we've struggled to exhaustion these God-Plans and God-Patterns eventually—in this lifetime or in the next or in the next—bring us home to Holy Wisdom and Her everlasting Grace. She wants us to grow and flourish so that we

can help other souls grow and flourish—each soul at its own pace and in its own time.

Holy Wisdom is heavily invested in each of us becoming our very best self. Seeing us graduate from one spiritual classroom into the next delights Her. Choosing for us an unexpected-but-much-needed earthly reward delights Her. However, watching us advance through the truly difficult classrooms where we learn lessons of deep inner refinement brings Her the greatest joy.

Do you see these patterns and plans playing out in your own life?

On the outdoor Reader Board this week there's a powerful message. I asked Reverend Debra Lajimodiere, our resident Native American Spiritual Healer, if she would channel a thought for me. Debra is one of the most modest people I know and in her customary humility she said: "Well, I've got something but I'm not sure how wonderful it is." What she received from her Guides was this: *Prosperity begins with Trust!*

Are we willing to **Trust**? Can we trust that even the most traumatic change to come into our life is **not** a punishment, but a gift and that this change will, over time, pave the way to a more fulfilling and a more loving existence?

Can we trust in God-Mind—and not in our Earth-Mind—to help us make sense of these wondrous on-going complex God-Plans and God-Patterns that unfold so effortlessly on planet Earth?

I like to joke—because I've always gotten a kick out of my own sense of humor—that Earth is a celestial asylum where we, the Not-Quite-Ready-For-Primetime-Souls, get to refine before we're turned loose on gentler planes of existence, among gentler spirits.



And, now, we come to my own on-going Northwest God-Plan. It began that morning in May of 1993. As I was swimming up through the layers of sleep I heard a familiar voice-in-my-head say: *Dear One, go to Seattle, buy a house and bloom.* I gave thanks.

Later that same day further information came through. My work in New York and Brooklyn, in fact, on the entire East Coast had come to an end; parts of my less attractive Karmic slate would be wiped clean; and I was to leave behind at the door to my beautiful brownstone apartment—where I had lived for 24-years—great chunks of the destructive residue from my difficult childhood that I continued to harbor in my mind and in my heart.

The move to Seattle was a special gift from Spirit. Holy Wisdom told me this move would be good for me physically as it would lessen the fight-or-flight tension I've always held in my body. This move would help me to soften, to be more tolerant, to be less judgmental, to let go of my rage. This move would help me become less guarded and more comfortable being human.

When I told my Brooklyn and Manhattan friends that I would be moving to Seattle they were flabbergasted. I was a profound Cancerian; I had seven houses in water and I was a stereotypical nester. For me, to make such a sudden and dramatic move from the east coast to the west coast was, quite literally, unbelievable.

Then I told my friends about Holy Wisdom's messages to me. That's when Kathy Rabbers gave me the name of a "spiritual" real-estate agency, Gerrard, Beattie & Knapp, LLC in Seattle. Kathy had studied and received her license as a massage therapist in Seattle. Kathy was the **only** "energy worker" whose work—above my body—could completely relax me.

Lesson 101: If you **don't** tell people about the unexpected changes coming into your life or your particular needs, God and Holy Wisdom cannot begin to gather together the hundreds of logistical jigsaw pieces that are needed to unfold a successful plan.

On June 22nd, 1993 I landed at Sea-Tac Airport and was met by the only two people I knew—Awilda Verdëjo and Hartwig Eichberg—who lived in Seattle.

They had lived for some years in Germany. She was an opera singer and he was a pianist and Bach scholar. Whenever they flew in to New York from Europe to visit her children, Awilda, who had been led to me by Maxine Davis (*See, Maxine Davis's Feldenkrais Website*), would come to see me in Brooklyn Heights, to seek whatever spiritual guidance I could offer.

In 1992, Hartwig and Awilda were called by God to move from Germany to the United States. Independent of each other they spun a globe-of-the-world. Independent of each other their index finger landed on Seattle. There are no limits to the magic in a God-Plan.

Home from the airport, we three—Awilda, Hart and I—had a wonderful reunion. When I finally fell into bed, sugar plums did not dance in my head, but the image of a two-storey structure with a peaked roof did.

The next day, June 23rd, I bought a tall skinny house—with a dormer roof. The dimensions of my home measure 15 feet wide by 55 feet long. The width and length of my tall skinny house are very similar to a Brooklyn brownstone duplex apartment. I felt right at home!

This type of architecture is unique to the Northwest and to Ballard, a Norwegian village near Puget Sound that was incorporated in 1890. Its original residents were mill-workers and fishermen. Their small humble cottages—usually measuring six hundred and eighty square feet or smaller—all featured the wood of first growth pine trees. Today—in 2016—their value is upwards of \$450,000.



On August 30th, 1993, my cats and I took up residence. In October, while attending a *Course in Miracles* reading circle held at a Lutheran church downtown, I met Darlene Spino, who led me here to you.

Over that summer, Holy Wisdom connected me with two top-notch contractors—a highly creative carpenter, Devin Gadouas and a meticulous house painter, Gary Stanchfield—and their Rolodexes of other fine craftsmen.

Together, we three made numerous improvements, turning my tall skinny house into a cozy castle. In hind-sight, these renovations on my home were preparing Devin, Gary and me for the work we would do three-years later—the renovation of this very special House-of-God.

You, and everyone who enters this chapel, bear witness to the transformation that has taken place.

Daily, I give thanks for my life in Seattle. And I send gratitude to each of you for coming to church this morning and for listening to my words. **Thanks Be to God.**



THE DIVINITY OF THE CIRCLE

Good morning . . . good morning to you all on this beautiful, hot, August Sunday. My being asked to give the sermon, today, makes real the mission of this church—“To foster individual growth in unconditional, non-judgmental, spiritual love.” And for the privilege of delivering today’s sermon, I thank you.

The theme for this morning’s meditation and the extended set-of-sermon-messages is centered on **The Divinity of the Circle**. But before I lead us *within* I’d like to give you a few background details.

For the past three months, I’ve been doing a lot of thinking about circles. Actually, Reverend Bernie Kaufmann started this thought process by suggesting that one of these Sundays I sing you my “Circle Song.”

This was a song that came to me during a ten-week workshop I took with Susan Osborn on Wednesday evenings up in Litchfield, Connecticut back in 1985.

Twelve of us, men and women, sat in a circle for three hours singing to-and-with each other and sharing our original songs we had composed during the preceding week.

Because I lived in Brooklyn, I’d stay overnight on a comfortable mattress on the floor in a room of my own at Paul Winter’s farmhouse.

After a cup of hot cocoa—to help me calm down from these remarkable and emotionally charged evenings—I’d fall into a deep sleep and would be up at sunrise, ready to drive back to Hastings-on-Hudson where my car was garaged. A stop along the way at a diner that served a delicious, hearty breakfast fortified my empty stomach.

I loved these drives to-and-from Connecticut. Each week the two-and-a-half hour drive back to Litchfield gave me plenty of time to practice; this particular week it was my “Circle Song.” While singing-and-driving I discovered a curious

cause-and-effect: the more robustly I sang the heavier my foot pressed down on the gas pedal. I was very, very lucky not to get a speeding ticket.

In the year 1985 I was going through an emotionally vulnerable time, musically. I had made the decision to leave a church choir I'd sung with since 1980. In 1983, we needed to find a new choir director. McNeil Robinson came with outstanding credentials and I was one of the strong "yea" votes to hire him. It wasn't very long, however, before Mr. Robinson made it humiliating clear to me that my voice did not suit the acappella English-Boy's-Choir sound he wanted.

I'd been squelching the vibrato in my big voice for three years and if I didn't leave this particular choir I might lose whatever courage I still had and stop singing altogether. Singing in Susan Osborn's circle, literally, gave me back my voice.

And I got hired that fall by Arthur Lawrence at The Church of the Good Shepherd where I stayed for six happy vocally healing years.

This morning, in these few minutes before we begin our meditation, I'd like to sing my "Circle Song" for you.



CIRCLE SONG

3
4

THE BEAU-TY OF THE CIR - CLE IS SO COMFOR-TING TO ME IN THE

SPIN - NING OF THE PLA - NETS IN THE MO - TION OF THE SEA. THE

BEAU - TY OF THE CIR - CLE IS SO COM - FOR TING TO ME IN THE

WARM LIGHT OF THE SUN IN THE WHITE GLOW OF THE MOON. THE

BEAU - TY OF THE CIR - CLE IS SO COM - FORTING TO ME IN A

YEL - LOW DAI - SY'S HEART IN THE CORE OF A TREE. THE

BEAU - TY OF GOD'S CIR - CLE IS SO COM - FOR TING TO ME IN A

CIR - CLE OF AN - CIENT STONES, IN A CIR - CLE OF O - PEN ARMS, IN A

CIR - CLE OF DANC - ING FEET, IN A CIR - CU - LAR SONG,

SING - ING OF THE BEAU - TY OF THINGS THAT ARE ROUND

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Meanwhile it's June of 1996, Reverend Bernie and I are driving up to Vancouver, B.C. where she will preach and I will sing. On I-5, as we talk about the daily concerns of our lives, something she says plants a significant seed in my mind which starts me ruminating about circles.

And as I'm thinking about circles, the words: *I will not leave you comfortless*, come into my mind. Usually, I think about these words in times of crisis. *But*, continues a soft voice *within*, *what if these words refer to another heaven-sent comfort. What if this comfort is a tangible, physical Mother Nature sort-of-comfort already here on Earth?*

What if God has filled this World-of-Matter with a glorious, organic, geometric shape to remind us of His Wholeness and of our wholeness, of His Divinity and of our divinity, of His Eternalness and our eternalness, and of the constancy of His Love and Energy that always embraces and supports us?



That's what I'd like us to consider this morning. I'd like us to meditate on The Divinity of the Circle and all the loving roundnesses that have touched our lives.



With these thoughts in mind, I invite you to close your eyes, get into an alert sitting posture, plant your feet firmly on the floor and your hands on your thighs with palms turned up. And breathe, deeply.

Breathe-in the gentle quiet of this chapel . . . Exhale your breath, with a whoosh. (Repeat 3-times). With each exhalation, release the worries, the physical aches and pains, the sorrows, the regrets you've brought with you this morning.

Now, open your arms wide with the palms of your hands turned up toward the sky.

Imagine you are holding a miniature Moon in your left palm and a miniature Sun in your right palm.

Slowly, draw both palms up to the top of your head so that the Sun and the Moon meet and merge above your Crown chakra.

Breathe deeply, and with each breath, draw the Light from these heavenly orbs down, down, down into every cell of your body.

To fully ground yourself, send the Light out your anal opening seven feet into the ground. Now, send the Light out the soles of your feet seven feet into the ground.

When you are filled with Light and firmly anchored, lower your left palm, holding the Moon and lower your right palm, holding the Sun.

Let the back of each hand rest comfortably in your lap. Breathe deeply . . . and know that the Light from the Moon and the Light from the Sun are streaming into you all the joyous memories of every moment when you were loved and comforted by something that was round.

Let your Mind open to these memories. Was it a teething ring that brought you comfort or the sound of sleigh-bells jingling or the sweetness of a cherry or the spinning wheels on your favorite pull-toy or a small rubber ball or the embrace of loving arms?

So many memories filled with kindness and hope and pleasure. “**I will not leave you comfortless.**” That’s what God said.

As you slowly open your eyes and orient yourself in space; as you feel the pew cushion beneath your bottom; as you stretch your entire body—the way cats stretch—give thanks to God for the gift of this holiest of shapes.



Random Thoughts On: “GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES”

How often have we heard someone say: “I’m going around in circles” and felt an instant wave of sympathy for that person? We’ve all had days, weeks, months—maybe even years—when our lives seemed to spin out of control and, if we were a snake, we’d be frantically trying to devour our tail.

Now, I’m a very literal-minded person so when Holy Wisdom gave me this phrase: “*Going around in circles*” as part of today’s extended message, I said to myself: *Oh, boy. Let’s see how I’m going to twirl my way through this concept without getting dizzy.*

But wait! What if we made a simple editorial change to our thinking and said: “Going around **within** Circles.” Do you see how that deepens Holy Wisdom’s suggestion that the circle is a divine shape that will not leave us comfortless?

Of course, I’m not forgetting that we humans have frequently perverted the integrity of the circle by making slave collars, cannon and musket balls, the hangman’s noose, etc. And that Mother Nature has frequently created Her own destructive circles of energy: tornadoes, the Bermuda triangle and hurricanes come to mind.

However, the good that has come from God’s geometric form—the circle—far outweighs the bad. After all, it was when we felled trees for firewood and

sawed slices from the round trunks of these trees that we—with Holy Wisdom’s help—invented the wheel!

I digress. What Holy Wisdom wanted me to talk about today is how important it is that we embrace this phrase “going around in circles” and that we need to understand, in philosophical and spiritual terms, our need to live each day *within* the circle of our essential selves.

When we are *within* The Divinity of the Circle, we are in tune with the flow of God’s energy. When we are *within* The Divinity of the Circle, we experience a sense of Wholeness, of Oneness, of the Eternity of the soul. As my pragmatic next-door neighbor Hilary Groves quipped the other day, “Yeah, thinking about my life as being lived within a circle feels okay. It’s traveling that linear line down the highway of life that can really get depressing!”



So I’ve been thinking about circles and being *within* them and about the comfort that circles have brought me throughout my life.

My first memory is of my round baby’s food dish. It never embarrassed me by flying off my highchair table because it was made of heavy, heavy English china. It had three triangular compartments: one for meat and two for vegetables. Even as a baby I preferred plain foods and I wanted order between the peas, the baked potato, and the cut-up pieces of meat. And then, as a final pièce de résistance, there was the picture of the cow jumping over the moon which was revealed when I’d scraped (usually I licked) my baby’s dish clean—if mother wasn’t watching.

When my mother died on February 15th, 1981, I found my baby’s dish among her keepsake possessions. Today, this same dish sits safely in my kitchen cupboard where it will be found upon my death.

My second memory is of the moon: slivers of moon, quarter moons, half-moons, and the big, bright circle of the full moon. All of these different moons shown in through the west-facing windows of bedroom bathing me in their light.

The moon taught me to trust that even when it went away it would come back, again and again—it's still returning to us night after night. Even on nights when the sky is thick with dark-gray clouds, you can see the moon from the windows of a plane flying above the clouds.

Sometimes, there would be two full moons in one month and I would feel doubly blessed. The moon kept reminding my child's soul to treasure Mother Nature's many gifts of things that are round.

The moon also taught me, early on—although I didn't understand this cyclical event at the time—about the eternal female menstrual cycle of filling up, spilling over, emptying, and renewing.

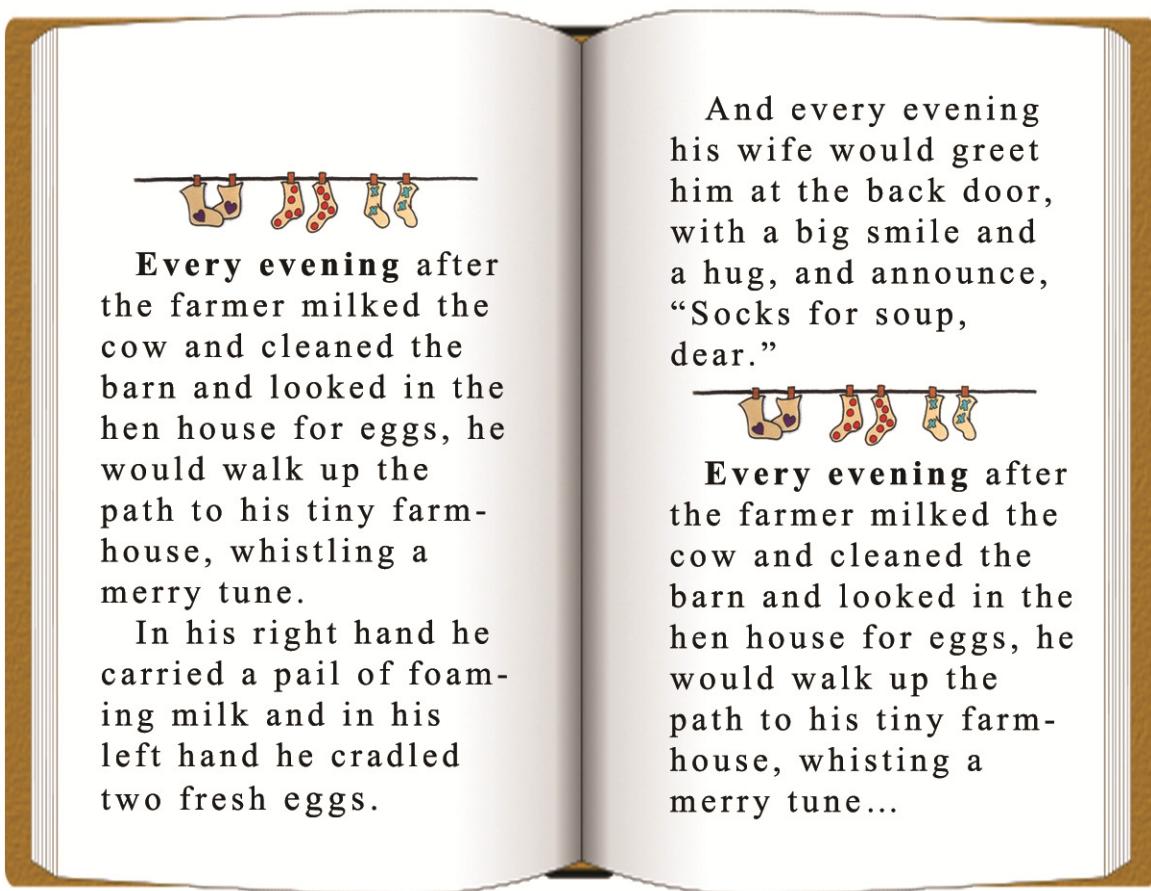
I should mention here that I was an only surviving child of two. Both my brother before me and I, were born with the umbilical cord wrapped tightly around our necks.

I was saved by an alert nurse and became part of a small family of three. My father was 42 and had his own law firm on Wall Street. My mother was 39 and had worked for years as the Executive Secretary to the head of Laidlaw & Company, a prestigious brokerage firm on Wall Street—and me.

Both my parents were avid readers; it was their love of books that brought a third circle into my life: the circular-story picture book that has a beginning, but no ending. Children love repetition. So do I.



Night after night, I'd beg my father to read me the same whimsical story, *Socks for Soup** about a hard-working farmer and his witty hard-working wife.



*This book is no longer listed in any cumulative picture book index.

In my child's world, where each day was filled with new and often overwhelming adventures, the comfort of this Zen-like story—the words of which I soon knew by heart—was profound.

I spent the first two years of my life with adults or playing by myself. My mother did not like children—the messes, the noise. (*At 80 I recognize a good deal of my mother in me.*) But she knew I couldn't spend all my time alone or with adults. So, when I was three she walked me from our home, which was on the

corner of Forest-and-Rockingstone Avenues in Larchmont, New York, to another house a few blocks away where there was a nursery-school for pre-kindergarten children.

I can't remember ever playing indoors with these children. What I do remember is the sounds-and-smells of fall leaves crunching beneath my feet as my new playmates and I held hands and danced in a circle, innocently singing, "Ring Around a Rosie" and "London Bridges Falling Down." If you were a child like me, who did not know how to get along with my peers, the circle was a great equalizer especially if the nice nursery-school lady took one of my hands.

Later on, in elementary school and middle school, I watched with compassion the emotional pain of children whose participation was passed over for team sports and social gatherings. And I endured the isolation and exclusion that happens in classrooms when desks are placed in rows with all the "smart kids" sitting up front and the "dumb kids" relegated to the back row.

I was one of the "dumb kids." I was put in the category of "slow learner" or its euphemistic equivalent "late bloomer." This made my mother furious. She became even angrier when I was unable to score higher than an 80 on a new battery of IQ tests.

The only time a teacher and the "smart kids" acknowledged my existence was when I became "disruptive." I don't think it will come as a surprise that I was left back—twice.

How could my classmates sit there, hands clasped atop their desks, listening and ingesting hour after hour of disconnected facts and not interrupt to ask a thousand-trillion questions? I certainly couldn't. I became more disruptive.



You see, I was already making some very insightful observations about the seemingly one-dimensional Earth-Mind facts that our teachers' were trying to teach us using our school textbooks and the far more real and interesting multi-dimensional world I experienced every day. Linear, sequential thinking—and what seemed to me to be unrelated, impersonal facts—was of little interest to me. I wanted to know how all the bits-and-pieces of life were interrelated like the parts of a geodesic dome.

Needless to say, in elementary and middle school most of my disruptive interjections were considered irrelevant distractions.

How different and how gloriously validating was my 10th grade experience at Emma Willard, a boarding school for girls in Troy, New York, where the number of students in each class was small and where every classroom had desk-chairs arranged in a welcoming, inclusive circle.

Imagine my delight when the questions I asked were not treated as “disruptions” but as interesting ideas worth exploring. Only in study-hall, where there were often 80 or more students studying at the same time, did it make sense for our desks to be arranged in rows.

God bless the benevolent circle.



This is why as an adult, circles of ancient standing stones and the mandalas of Tibetan Buddhists attract me. There is a reason why the triangle and the cross that is formed when you unfold a box—both of which are sacred shapes—don’t carry the same weight for me as circles do.

By their very structure circles with holes or without holes sustain an uninterrupted flow of energy. This is the positive aspect of “going around in circles;” of being ***within*** a compatible community; of being ***within*** the embrace of

one's own body; of being *within* the embrace of a God-Circle where an unconventional soul—like me—feels safe.

Just now, in my mind's eye, I'm seeing hundreds of illuminated paintings of Mary and Jesus and in every painting Mary and Jesus are crowned with holy halos—this tells me they, too, are under the Divine protection of God's circle.

And, now, I'm seeing many, many paintings of Buddha with seven circles, symbolizing the seven principal chakra centers superimposed on his body. The imprint of God's holy circle right there *within* our own earthly bodies.

I'm convinced one of the ways each of us can demonstrate an appreciation for the lessons of this physical planet-of-Matter is to discover how to be *within* the circle of life.

Too often we find ourselves on the outer edge of life's circle, getting sucked into the undertow of impossible traffic jams, disturbing 24-hour news cycles and disruptive robocalls. This, of course, increases the feeling that we are spinning out-of-control. To stop the spinning we need to recalibrate. We need to disengage from the bombardment of external distractions. We need to slow down our thinking and breathe, deeply, and we need to get quiet. We do **not** need to psychically exit our bodies.

If our minds allow Holy Wisdom to be fully present *within* us, we won't need to leave our bodies. We will begin to thrive *within* our bodies because we will be fully *within* the sacred circular energy-flow of Mother Nature's planet Earth.



I was never given the gift—or, perhaps, the curse—of being able to escape Matter, at will. And for that I'm grateful. **I am sure** my

heavenly contract states, unequivocally, that I am to be **here** in Matter no matter how uncomfortable being in Matter gets.

Is there a way to stop the spinning?

If I can't stop the spinning, perhaps I need to join the Sufi Dervishes in their ritual spinning. *Hmm*—perhaps not. I dizzy, easily.



There is a far more ordinary way to stop the spinning; I can walk quite easily through one of Holy Wisdom's most powerful doorways—the doorway-of-repetition.

I'm quite sure mastering the art of doing such simple tasks as peeling carrots or potatoes or washing the same pots-and-pans and dishes over and over or straining hot cooking fat, without succumbing to short-cuts or tuning out, takes a very special kind of practice. I say this knowing it will probably take me dozens of lifetimes to master the art of attending, joyfully, to "chopping wood" and "carrying water." Tibetan monks' daily practice this practical interpretation of "going around in circles."

There is no time like the present to begin honoring the practice of repetition. One of our church members, Sue, diligently cleaned our three lavatories once a week for over a year. Her reward? She was able to move her life from Ballard to the East Coast, where—having mastered the art of repetition—I feel confident she is no longer cleaning church toilets. She may own her own cleaning company!

Do you think one of the reasons God and Holy Wisdom encourages humankind to create churches and church calendars is so we church-folk will have the opportunity to practice the art of repetition?

Two Sundays ago, Michael Lauren talked about setting spiritual goals and living life with purpose. I'm here to repeat what he so eloquently told you. "If we wish to become enlightened we must learn to live every moment with purposeful excellence and to pay careful attention to the little details."



My first true experience of this kind of purposeful repetition was when I realized how much I loved editing manuscripts that eventually became published books.

Book-editing—done the old-fashioned way—is an endless process of reading and re-reading an author's manuscript. Then editing the author's words; reading the copy-editor's corrections and suggested changes; checking-in with the author; transferring the copy-editor's, the author's and my changes from the original manuscript to the printer's first set of galleys; proof-reading these galleys; and then minutely reading the master-set of galleys—they used to be called "blues" because the ink was blue—all the while making sure spelling, punctuation and sentences read well and were without error.

What a splendid exercise in repetition!



Nowadays, the computer has made the job of typing and editing one's own manuscript almost pleasurable, but the repetition of the many minute tasks of editing seem to have disappeared and the books that I read currently are filled with typos, with "widows"—those sentences at the tops of pages that don't go from

margin-to-margin—dropped lines and/or duplicated lines of type. With Internet publishing, it's all about speed and I can see that this speed has diminished our commitment to excellence. We hurry through the very tasks that can bring us **within** the Divinity of the Circle.



Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk and peace activist, wrote a charming book called, **Present Moment/Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living**.

Each short verse concerns an ordinary task. Do we take time to really feel the textures of the clothes we put on our bodies? Do we take mindful time washing and drying our clothes? Do we take time to cook ourselves simple, nourishing, tasty meals? Do we take time to reflect on our blessings and to give thanks? These are the questions Thich Nhat Hanh asks in his verses.



Each of us needs to be responsible for the many repetitive tasks of self-maintenance that, as we get older, can literally consume an entire day. I have a feeling I could be happier if I put the countless daily repetitions of my life under the heading: **Time well spent**. Little by little and day by day I'm gradually coming to realize how these daily tasks enhance my spiritual life. Aging or "seasoning"—as Holy Wisdom puts it—has been instructive in helping me redefine my priorities and my goals.

I was talking with Charles King the other day about the sacredness of repetition and Charles asked if I had heard of the metaphysical group in Japan

called ***Perfect Liberty***? They've taken the monastic concept of "chopping wood" and "carrying water" very much to heart.

There is a hotel—a large hotel with many, many rooms and many, many beds—where they hold their retreats. During one particular retreat, the intense spiritual activity was bed-making. Those members of ***Perfect Liberty*** who wished to participate went from room to room making beds and they kept on making beds until they found ***within*** themselves the art, the joy, the perfect harmony of this most routine of repetitive tasks.

Outside God's Divine Circle of repetition, bed-making is a chore, a burden, a drudgery—a prison-of-monotony. ***Within*** the Divine Circle-of-Doing, this task brings a sense of peace, harmony and even love to the one making the beds. The feeling that this most mundane task is a prison-of-monotony vanishes.

I haven't mentioned the doorways of Yoga, T'ai-Chi Ch'üan, Qigong, Aikido, Kung Fu, and all the many esoteric martial-art forms of repetitive movement which are meditations in their own right.

This morning I come with the message that the simplest repetitive task can be the perfect doorway through which we step. We can leave behind the chaos of mindless spinning and we can enter, instead, the calm steady flow of circular energy.

Each of us has a task within this church; it might be playing the organ or arranging flowers or preaching or baking cookies for coffee hour or keeping our financial records or singing in the choir or designing and posting flyers or creating messages for the outdoor reader board or washing dishes or ironing tablecloths or cleaning toilets—that draws us gently ***within*** The Divinity of the Circle where Time as we know it stops and where we know we are in the company of angels. The trick is to apply ourselves to the tasks we **don't** like with the same conscious surrender-of-self we bring to the tasks we passionately love.

I'd like to complete the circle of this message by saying that the most unconditional relationships I've ever experienced have been those that are circular.

I'm thinking particularly of my long-lasting friendships with Reverend Bernie Kaufmann, with Awilda Verdëjo and with Penelope Kimble Amabile. These friendships have probably existed over many lifetimes and are surely friendships lived **within** The Divinity of the Circle where there is no beginning and no end. Such friendships are great gifts to be treasured.



My final wish, today, is that each of you discovers your own personal doorway that will lead you from the precarious outer rim of planet Earth to the full blessedness and inner peace that is waiting for you **within** the core of God's Divine Circle. **Amen.**



DIVINE ENERGY & THE EGO

Good morning. Once again it's the first Sunday in August and, as you know, August has been designated Layspeakers' month. I'm delighted to be the first-speaker—even in this wilting Ballard heat and even as I try my best to be heard over the racket our much-appreciated ceiling fans make as they whirl at top speed. Can you all hear me? Yes? Good.

Lately, I've been thinking about **Divine Energy & the Ego**. This is a topic near-and-dear to my “bossy” self. I see you all smiling.

I'd like to dive right in with a true Mother-Nature story. I believe Mother Nature may be the greatest teacher of Divine Life-Force Energy. This energy which the Chinese call Qi (*chee*) runs through the veins of all plants in the Plant Kingdom and all creatures in the Animal Kingdom on planet earth. Indeed, this Divine Life-Force Energy runs through every atom in the cosmos.

Why do I think Mother Nature is our greatest teacher? Because She, together with all the elementals of nature, surrenders Her Will, completely, to the Will of Divine Life-Force Energy.



Once, not so long ago, there was a young girl who loved Nature. Even though she didn't know much about It she loved to run through fields of tall meadow grass, stopping to pick bouquets of wild flowers as she ran. She loved to take long walks in pine forests where she sometimes found owl scat. This small

rodent-prey—caught, eaten, its flesh dissolved by the juices in an owl's stomach, the indigestible parts regurgitated from the owl's gizzard—lay among the pine needles on the forest floor. It was a small grayish-black sack of fur wrapped tightly around many tiny bones. Owl scat was a real find.

However, her joy of finding owl scat was no match for the young girl's love of playing in dirt.

Centipedes and beetles, which she often discovered under rocks and rotting logs, startled her but they did not frighten her. She would hold them in her hands and talk to them, asking them what sort of miniature habitat they would like to live in. She enjoyed creating these miniature habitats for bugs—always remembering that they needed water and food—and then she would put the bugs in their new-terrarium-habitat and take them home.

She created a life-size habitat for herself.

The hollow underbrush of a large pine tree was the perfect setting for her pretend teepee. She cleared the ground of pine needles and pebbles until it was smooth. She made a pretend pine-needle-and-twigs cook-fire set within a circle of stones. She notched a strong, stripped branch at both ends, and with a piece of extra-thick fishing line, she bent the straight branch, knotting both ends to make her bow-string taut. Next, she carved points on the tips of straight twigs and notched the other ends so they would fit into the taut string of her bow. Finally, she made a quiver out of a perfectly round piece of white birch bark.

She found a stump to sit on and she found two long logs which she hauled to a nearby stream. Now, she had a bridge and could cross the stream without getting her feet wet. The young girl played for hours in her private world of Nature.

This eventually led her, years later when she was a young woman, to a friend's backyard behind a four-storey brownstone in the heart of a very big city. Her friend had just moved into the ground-floor apartment and she was busy cleaning, painting, arranging furniture, hanging pictures and plants, putting away pots, pans, dishes, linens, clothes, displaying her books, her treasures, and doing all

the necessary tasks to make this new home exactly to her liking. She did **not**, however, like digging and playing in the dirt so she asked the young woman who **did** to come and make her backyard beautiful.

The young woman was thrilled. No more miniature habitats. No more pretend teepees. Here was a real, life-size rectangular space in which to create.

She decided that the centerpiece of the backyard would be a small two-foot-long stone bench. She'd found this lintel keystone lying among weeds in an empty city lot. To raise and support this stone bench she would stack two short columns of bricks.



There were plenty of bricks. A good deal of time was spent digging up bricks. In fact, the backyard seemed to have been planted with bricks. Finally, the tongs of her spading fork stopped hitting bricks and she could move on to other aspects of her garden design.

Surrounding the bench would be a four-foot circle covered with medium-sized gravel. But before the gravel was laid down, the earth within in the circle had to be cleared and flattened.

Underneath the bricks she found bulbs, all shapes and sizes of bulbs. Using the spading fork, she gently unearthed the bulbs and set them aside; they would be replanted around the fenced-in borders of the garden.

Once the center circle was cleared of bulbs and the dirt flattened, the work of laying down two circular layers of industrial plastic and covering the plastic with hundreds of pounds of gravel went smoothly.

The job of outlining the circle and the four short paths—north, south, east, west—that would lead from the bench to the surrounding cement sidewalks

required patience. The young woman decided to sink each brick—narrow side up—into the soft dirt. Later, she would wet-down and pack the earth around the bricks so when the soil dried it would hold the bricks firmly in place. Next, using left-over bricks, she designed a small half-moon-shaped herb garden.

The work was completed by late fall and the backyard garden slept in serene repose through the winter and on into early spring.



Around the middle of April, the young woman got a phone call from her friend. Something very strange was happening in the backyard underneath the gravel and plastic.

The young woman took the subway from her home to her friend's brownstone apartment, walked briskly through the apartment and out into the backyard to have a look. What she beheld stunned her!

Where there had been a level gravel circle and four level paths, there were now strange lumps and humps and a few pale-green shoots poking up through the gravel.

The young woman drew back a section of plastic—and stared. There, with the strength of Hercules, tender spears of daffodil and crocus were emerging from bulbs that had gone undetected.

In defiance of the dark, in defiance of two layers of industrial plastic and hundreds of pounds of gravel these bulbs—obeying the imperative of Divine Life-Force Energy—were trying to bloom!

Can you imagine what humankind could accomplish if we became One with this Divine Life-Force Energy?



There is a God-Plan here on earth to help us to do just that. I call it **The Tapestry of Dao**.

Holy Wisdom is so prescient. Over the centuries, She observed one of planet Earth's ancientest of cultures. She had been watching this country blessed with spiritual masters in-the-flesh; this country of magnificent artisans, this country of great inventors, this fertile land worked diligently by humble hands, this great land-mass peopled by billions of worthy souls.

Holy Wisdom witnessed the current violence taking place toward the citizenry of this ancient culture. She watched the people struggle to survive famines and disastrous relocation policies caused by the leaders' of this country who were determined to execute an insane Earth-Mind Plan based on their need to suppress criticism of the Plan and on their need to present a sense—if only an illusory one—of equality among the people.

This was their government's Plan. They would order rebellious, trouble-making city scholars—whom they thought were far too privileged—to be sent to the countryside to be re-educated by farmers and they would transport farmers—whom they knew were not at all privileged and would not be trouble-makers—from the countryside to the cities to be re-educated as doctors, scientists and engineers!

This country in such chaos, this country called China was, in Holy Wisdom's heavenly opinion, the perfect place from which **The Tapestry of Dao** would be launched, woven and realized.





My own tiny thread in this Holy-Wisdom weaving can be traced back to September, 1972.

But for now I want us to stay in the present moment of August, 1997. And just as the weaver, sitting before her loom, moves the shuttlecock to carry the thread back and forth across the warp and welt of her weaving, I'd like us to move back and forth across Time and Space because **The Tapestry of Dao** is a massive God-Plan.



Since February of 1996, I've been in the demanding classroom of Qi. From February through June, I've made a monthly pilgrimage to the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine in Portland where I'm taking a Guided Qigong course, the prerequisite for the Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong Teacher Certification program—the only college program of its kind in the world. This program was created and developed by Professor Chen, Hui Xian.

The movements of the *Five Routines of Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*—as some of you already know—are a Mind-Body-Spirit discipline based on the movements of the crane. In China, there are literally thousands of forms of Qigong. “Qi” means Life-Force energy and “gong” means the physical skills needed to improve our connection to and our use of Divine Life-Force Energy.

Like many inscrutable things from the East, the Mandarin language is a picture language in which a series of characters are built into a block of words called an ideogram. Each class of people, be they scholars, poets, warriors or peasants have a different set of characters that form the ideograms. This means that when someone who is Chinese—and can read Mandarin—looks at the phrase

“turtle longevity” or the phrase “clapping hands” or the phrase “crane touching water” he or she knows, immediately, which caste or class is being addressed.

The vocal patterns used in speaking the characters that make up each ideogram can also radically change the meaning of a character.

The west cannot, literally, translate Mandarin either alphabetically or phonetically into English. Only someone such as a scholar who is bilingual in both Mandarin and English can achieve a close approximation.

The Chinese do not have an ideogram for God. Rather, they speak of The Universe, they speak of Dao and they speak of Qi. But make no mistake the Chinese know that The Universe, Dao, and Qi are Divine in essence. And, as far as this Westerner in concerned, The Universe, Dao, and Qi are all descriptions of God.

The history of *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* is of special interest to New-Age seekers of Truth because the movements are easy, they are pleasing to do, they can heal the diseases that kill us and the movements and theories of this particular form of Qigong come from a spiritual energy source known as “The Blue Star.”

This form of Qigong was channeled back in 1976 to a man named Zhao (pronounced *jow*), Jin Xiang, who had only a fourth-grade education. As a teenager, Zhao was taught various forms of Qigong to help him recover from a severe case of tuberculosis.

Prior to this channeling in 1976, Zhao had been searching for a way to use Qigong to help people who were ill with terminal diseases. He felt sure—just as a form of Qigong had cured him of tuberculosis—there must be a form of Qigong that could benefit patients for whom the medical doctors in China did not have a cure and could only shrug and give their patients this unhappy advice: “Go home, rest, eat good food, and wait to die.” There were no known remedies for these killer-diseases.

But Time was of the essence; the people Zhao wished to help had, perhaps, a few months to live. Zhao prayed for guidance and shortly thereafter he began receiving other-worldly picture messages.

Where Holy Wisdom is concerned, it doesn't matter that this esoteric information of the highest order was being channeled to a man in his 40s with a fourth-grade education. The ascended master-energies of "The Blue Star" found a way through picture images to communicate with Zhao.

Zhao never questioned these mental drawings. Instead, he practiced the movements, diligently, hour after hour, day after day, until he had not only memorized the movements he had memorized the explanatory commentary that went with each movement.

When the ascended masters gave him a sign that he was ready to teach *The Five Routines of Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*, he would go daily to one of the parks around Beijing. (In China, Qigong exercises are practiced out-doors—no matter what the weather.) Gradually, Zhao found himself teaching nine elderly people; seven of whom were terminally ill.

Within a matter of months, all of these elderly people were recovering their health and word began to spread. Soon there were fifty students and then students by the hundreds and then students by the thousands were practicing *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* because of its gentle nature, its communal aspect and because it brought results. It is not hyperbole to say a vast God-Plan had been unleashed in China.



For the first time in Chinese history, one of the great Daoist secrets—the knowledge of how to harness and use Cosmic Qi—was being made available to the masses.

Neither Zhao nor his students were aware of this fact. Little did Zhao know that there, in a park in Beijing, he was teaching one of the greatest Daoist mysteries to anyone who came to learn and to be healed. This caused a good deal of turmoil among the Chinese Communist elite.

But it was too late to suppress the knowledge contained in Holy-Wisdom's **Tapestry of Dao** and it was too late to stem the flood of Chinese humanity eager to learn *The Five Routines of Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*.

When it became necessary to produce some sort of book, Zhao—keeping the true source of this form of Qigong a secret—asked a student-artist to carefully draw picture representations of each form. He then asked another long-term practitioner and cancer survivor to transcribe his verbal dictations into ideograms. And then he asked the editor-in-chief of a Beijing Publishing House—who was one of Zhao's first students—to publish his book. The book and the wisdom it contained elevated Zhao, Jin Xiang to Master Zhao.

Finally, in 1988, during his first visit to the United States, Master Zhao confided his secret—the true source of Soaring Crane Qigong—to the same student/practitioner and cancer survivor, Professor Chen, Hui Xian, who had helped him transcribe his original notes and who, for most of her life, had been an English translator. Perhaps he felt safe sharing his truth in “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

Since his 1988 trip to the United States, Master Zhao has preferred to remain in China. However, his student and English translator Chen, Hui Xian, who describes herself as a bridge between East and West, moved to the United States in 1994 at the invitation of the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM), where she began teaching *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* to OCOM students—most of whom were studying to become certified acupuncturists.



You don't as yet know that back in 1993, Chen and I met for the first time in Manhattan on a hot summer day. We instantly recognized that we were spiritual sisters. When we finally said our "good-byes" that afternoon, I knew Chen was headed to Portland and Chen knew I was moving to Seattle. How did Holy Wisdom reconnect us three years later?



Well, one day I was at the Northwest Institute of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NIAOM) in Wallingford a satellite community of Seattle—to post a flyer announcing that I would be offering classes in T'ai-Chi Ch'üan Wu Style and there on the same bulletin board was another flyer announcing Chen, Hui Xian's arrival in Seattle to teach *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*. I took down the information and called her!

"Leighdean," she shouted, "where are you?"

"In Seattle," I shouted back. "May I take your Soaring Crane class?"

"Of course! Of course! It is for beginners. You will be my guest and take it for free."

And that's a perfect example of how Holy Wisdom works!



Because *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* had cured Chen of her terminal cancer and given her back her life, she determined that her “mission” for the rest of her life would be teaching and certifying Qigong teachers who would become the lineage holders and the legacy-keepers of *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*.

They would be emissaries and would bring this form of Qigong throughout the West, to Ireland, to France, to Japan and beyond. After all, the ascended energies of “The Blue Star” told Zhao—back in 1976—that *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* would play an important part in healing the mind-body-spirit of the whole world. Chen—and a chosen number of her disciples—are devoting their lives to fulfilling Chen’s mission and “The Blue Star’s” prophesy.



Do you begin to see this massive weaving and the various human threads that are playing their part and contributing to this great God-Plan?

Little-by-little across different cultures in different countries and across continents—that include willing participants of different faiths and people of great wealth who want to fund and make this Qigong venture a success and, of course, the appeasement of obstinate governments—this God-Plan continues to unfold because loyal disciples have surrendered their personal Egos in order to serve **The Tapestry of Dao**. Again, this is the way the powerful, transcendent energies of a true God-Plan work.

And there is more, much, much more! But, first, let's rest a moment in the wise embrace of Mother Earth.



When I seek relief from the stresses of modern life, I go to a quiet beach where the edge of the land and the edge of the sea meet. I was born in 1936, the Year of the Rat, under the sign of Cancer. I've always lived near water.

When I need the companionship of wise old friends, I sit in the midst of smooth stones.

I'm here this morning to share with you some thoughts about Divine Energy and the Ego. But to do this, fully, I must first tell you about my relationship with stones because communities of stones that live near water have taught me, by perfect demonstration, most of what I know about Divine Energy and the Ego and about surrendering the Ego.



I walked into the classroom of stones on a hot summer morning on a beach in Florida in 1960. Head cast down and wearing flip-flops to protect my feet from the sizzling sand, I watched as the Atlantic Ocean floated a "whistle" stone—a

nature-made musical instrument—onto the wet sand at my feet. That same morning, the ocean gave me a moon-shaped stone talisman I often wear around my neck.

Then, in 1986—back in Brooklyn—I found myself drawn to a vacant lot near the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway where I sat for hours with my eyes closed, holding stones. In the process of holding these stones, I felt distinct waves of pain some of these stones were sending into my hands and up my arms. I came to understand that these stones were young and while they were not as yet awake, consciously, the energy they discharged was a pain that came from the soil in which they lay.

The energy of the more mature stones quieted my mind. In fact, as I sat there I realized that the stones that were awake were sending kaleidoscopic, translucent colors into my Third Eye, guiding me into a deep state of meditation.

In the late afternoon when I got up to leave, there were two particular stones that let me know they were willing to come home with me. The large, reddish, rough-textured stone had a slow-flowing, spiraling energy that instantly calmed and centered me. The small lichen-green, heart-shaped stone with its ragged hole was clearly a healer of wounded hearts.

These two stones, communicating through their stone-consciousness, had agreed to be my teachers. I thanked the other stones and carried my two teacher-stones home to my apartment.

Back then I did not understand the significance of that day spent among the weeds and the stones. Today, I know those stones in that empty city lot were teaching me that all God's creations have God-Consciousness which means we, too, are One with all of God's creations.

That was thirty-one years ago and I am still studying in the classroom of stones; stones on the coastal beach of Rye, New Hampshire; stones on the beaches of Thurso and along the Dingle Peninsula in Scotland; stones on the Mediterranean beach at Valencia, Spain. And closer-to-home—stones on the Dungeness spit at

Sequim; stones along the Olympic peninsula; and stones at the water's edge on the south beach of Discovery Park in Seattle—all these stones on all these different beaches throughout the world have shared their stone-wisdom with me and have shown me the unstoppable power of Divine Energy and its refinement of the Ego.



I've spent long hours on the east-and-west coasts, gazing offshore at armies of great rock monoliths that rise out of the sea and stand sentinel over the land.

Years later, on return visits, I've found these same jagged monoliths hunched over and smoothed. In another ten years—or maybe twenty—I know these great-great-great-grandfather sentinels will disappear beneath the ocean's surface. They will slowly be reduced to boulders, then to pumpkin-size rocks, then to baseball-size stones then to large pebbles that will roll back and forth, back and forth, on the ocean floor until the motion of the tides turns them into tiny pebbles—and then into sand.



What does this study of stones, this observing the life-cycle of stones have to do with Divine Energy and the Ego?

Well, I would like to believe that as I practice *The Five Routines of Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* that Qi is at work on my considerable Ego in the same way water wears away rock. I would like to believe that Qi is wearing away the sharp edges of my combative personality and wearing away my need to control and wearing away my need to be right and wearing away my need to judge others and wearing away my need for validation and wearing away my fear, my rage, my grief. I pray that Qi is wearing away all the sour elements of my nature that as a Light-Worker and as a servant of Holy Wisdom I no longer need nor want.



There are so many paths to enlightenment and so many spiritual disciplines—why was I drawn to Soaring Crane Qigong?

I believe it was because I asked to incarnate into physical Matter where action, conflict and paradox rule, where refinement comes from physically experiencing Life-in-Matter—but most important for me—because it was impossible to lie to myself or to others when the spiritual discipline I was practicing is an exercise everyone could witness me doing.

I became a disciple of *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong* because it thoroughly absorbed my mind, because it **was** healing my body and my spirit and because I loved knowing that I was carrying on the direct lineage of another heaven-sent set of movements.



I was a relative newcomer to the healing art of Qigong, but before I found Qigong, my dedicated classmates and I had been meeting, weekly, for twenty years at Carnegie Hall, the New York studio where Sophia Delza, “recognized as the first and greatest master of the Wu Chien-Ch’üan System of T’ai-Chi Ch’üan in the Western world,” taught her classes.

T’ai-Chi Ch’üan Wu Style is a soft, intrinsic system of 108 movements. It is not one of the more familiar extrinsic martial-arts systems—although it can be transformed, easily, into a very effective system of self-defense.

From our very first class Sophia Delza made it clear to her students that Tai-Chi Ch’üan is **not** a “healing” form of Qi; it is an emotionally refining, physical maintenance form of Chi.

Sophia was a no-nonsense teacher. During my first class any need I had to find a personal space on the floor was quickly disavowed. We arrived; there was very little chit-chat; we took off extraneous clothing, put on our soft cotton Kung Fu slippers; entered her Carnegie studio; found whatever space was available and the hour-long class began. Subtle jostling for a special place on the floor was **never** tolerated.

T’ai-Chi Ch’üan Wu Style is an elegant and demanding style. It takes a year to learn all 108 forms. It takes another five years to begin to make smooth, effortless transitions from one movement to the next. It takes a lifetime of practice to become One with this transcendent style.

Sophia never called herself a Master, we students simply knew she **was** one. For the last forty-five years of her long life she was the devoted student of Grandmaster Ma, Yüeh Liang, “the greatest living exponent of the Wu style.”

Grand Master Ma was Wu's student—and also happily married to Wu's daughter. And Wu, of course, had been taught this Wu Chien-Ch'üan style of T'ai-Chi Ch'üan by The Universe.

The one quality spiritual lineage-teachers share is absolute Integrity-to-the-Form. Neither the original Master nor any of his or her serious students fools around with the Form knowing, as they do, that the Form comes directly from Dao.

When Sophia had questions about the Form, she would write to Grandmaster Ma in Shanghai and he would reply with letters filled with encouragement, philosophy, and practical instructions—which she would pass along to us. When Sophia completed an article or a book about her experiences teaching the Wu style, she would send the manuscript to Grandmaster Ma for his review and approval.

Sophia Delza, who had been a professional modern dancer before she went to China and met Master Ma, attracted many dancers to her studio. They were always chagrined to learn that the 108 movements of T'ai-Chi Ch'üan Wu Style had **nothing** in common with dance-movements of any sort.

Sophia Delza was a brilliant, demanding teacher. She died a year ago this past June of 1996 at the age of 92, still the devoted student of Grandmaster Ma who continued teaching in Shanghai until his death in March of 1998 at age 96.

Among the tangible treasures Sophia left in this world are volumes and volumes of personal journals including her daily notes detailing the minute variations, the struggles and insights she had each time she practiced the 108 consecutive forms of T'ai-Chi Ch'üan Wu style.

I am in awe of her dedication to the Form. I am in awe of her fervent and constant attention to detail. Sophia showed me, by perfect example, that unless a spiritual discipline is practiced as continuously and as naturally as one breathes it is not as yet a spiritual discipline. And the thoughts, actions and feelings of the practitioner are still being governed by the Ego.

When I watched Sophia Delza going through the movements of T'ai-Chi Ch'üan Wu Style and when I now watch Chen, Hui Xian going through the

movements of *The Five Routines of Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*, I know I have been and continue to be in the presence of an authentic, lineage teacher. I also know I am in the presence of Holy Wisdom.

How do I know these things? I know these things because I can feel the energy around these teachers become a loving, grace-filled enactment of the discipline. I know this because I can see the body of these teachers become One with the transcendent Form. I know this because I can sense that the Ego of these strong-willed teachers has merged with Dao and that their Mind-Body-Spirit has become as One. I feel blessed to have had such teachers.



Take a deep breath—and release it! The shuttlecock is moving quickly, back-and-forth, the pattern of the warp and weft of this celestial weaving is still unfolding.



We have moved forward to February, 1996. I am still in an accelerated classroom of Qigong. But *before* February, 1996, before God called me to Seattle in May of 1993, and years after my introduction to T'ai-Chi Ch'üan Wu Style, I found myself fighting hot flashes and the fatigue of menopause. Of course, I had forgotten Sophia Delza's specific caution that the **Chi** of T'ai-Chi Ch'üan does **not** treat health problems.

What **could** address my health issues was the heavy-duty Cosmic medicine of Qi—as in Qigong. So, in January of 1992 in New York City, I enrolled in a *Soaring Crane Qigong* workshop offered at The New York Open Center. This workshop would be taught by Wu, Yi (no relation to the previously mentioned Wu) and Shen, Rong-er, a husband-and-wife team from Nanjing, China, who had studied for a short time with Master Zhao.

One stumbling block, Wu, Yi—an artist of renown—who had to flee to Japan during Chairman Mao’s reign and the only holy man it has been my good fortune to meet—and Shen, Rong-er spoke very little English. All the classes were taught in Mandarin with some memorable English translations—such as “kh-neenaps” for kneecaps and the “veteb-bray”—provided by a young Chinese student, Liu, Zhaobin, who was studying engineering, and whose mother just happened to be one of the nine in Master Zhao’s original group of sick and terminally ill students.



In the summer of 1992, in the great **Tapestry of Dao** weaving, my own small thread first introduced in 1972 into the section devoted T’ai-Chi Ch’üan Wu Style now takes its place on the loom among the threads in the section devoted to the art of Qigong where it remains.



There was an immediate rapport between my mind-body-spirit and the movements of *Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*. It helped that I had spent twenty years learning Tai-Chi Ch’üan Wu Style.

During the first week of practice I began to feel the effects of Life-Force Energy coursing through my body. It was akin to the lightness I felt when **in** Spirit even though I was **in** a physical body and **in** the density of Matter.

For the next eighteen months I signed up for every Qigong workshop Wu, Yi and Shen, Rong-er offered. I took a weekly subway ride from my apartment in Brooklyn to their home in Flushing, Queens where I joined other members of the Qigong Health Education Center, who, like me wanted to become Qigong teachers. There was only one small shadow throughout this exhilarating time—I longed to know what “mysteries” were being lost in translation.

Ask and you shall receive. Whereupon I found myself climbing a ladder and entering the artist's loft of Michael Orach who had, himself, spent a brief time studying with Master Zhao in Beijing. I explained to Michael about the language barrier and my desire to know more about Qigong. Michael suggested I might like to meet a Professor Chen, Hui Xian, who was in New York for a few days. And he sold me a copy of Master Zhao's book ***Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*** translated into English by Chen, Hui Xian.

Chen and I met at her American friend, Judy's apartment in Manhattan and it was as though we had known each other for many, many lifetimes. I could not express my joy at finding such a soul-filled spiritual sister—who also spoke English!

We talked and laughed and shared our plans for the future; I was preparing to move to Seattle and she would be a guest lecturer and teacher of ***Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*** at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine.

That summer of 1993, I left New York with Wu, Yi and Shen, Rong-er's blessing to teach ***Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong*** in Seattle. But I knew—having met Chen and having read through a copy of her translation of Master Zhao's ***Chinese Soaring Crane Qigong***—I had much more to learn.

This brings me back to the importance of a direct lineage teacher and the importance of surrendering to the Form. Teachers such as Sophia Delza and Professor Chen keep us students on a right-minded path. They remind us by their example to be always faithful to the Form. That the Form can change negative, destructive patterns of behavior into wholesome, loving patterns of behavior. It is our faithfulness to the Form that will help us set aside time to practice and to maintain the discipline that is keeping us fully present and is helping us see life more clearly.



And, here, I'm going to pause so that I can read from a book titled *Subtle Sound: The Zen Teachings of Maurine Stuart* which caught my eye last week in a second-hand book store. When I picked up her book it fell open to the following passage. *"What does this seeing clearly mean? It doesn't mean that you look at something and analyze it, noting all its composite parts; no. When you see clearly, when you look at a flower and really see it, the flower sees you. It's not that the flower has eyes, of course. It's that the flower is no longer just a flower, and you are no longer just you. Flower and you have dissolved into something way beyond what we can even say, but we can experience this. This kind of seeing, this kind of understanding is 'as-it-is-ness.' This wonderful intuitive wisdom infuses everything we do, if we just open ourselves up to it, and forget about all our selfish petty concerns, forget about what we want, what we must get, whether this is doing something for us. Forget it. We are here for the sake of all sentient beings, and we are one with all sentient beings when we come to see this as-it-is-ness. Meister Eckhart, a thirteenth-century Christian mystic who really understood this, said, 'The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me.'"*



To see clearly, to hear clearly and to be open and attentive to the countless ways the Ego tries to subvert our bond with spirit depends on our faithfulness to whatever spiritual discipline we practice. Eventually, our faithful practice will refine us and, ultimately, lead us to Enlightenment. If we alter any aspect of the spiritual Form we've chosen, for whatever reason, without the approval or guidance of a spiritual lineage teacher, we corrupt the Will of Dao—and we take

ourselves down the path of earthly illusion and self-deceit. If we surrender to Divine Life-Force Energy, we will inexorably be led out of our earthly self-centered minds and into God's Mind.

This is why I am here on planet Earth. My soul is perfect, but my personality is not. I am here on planet Earth to refine because my Ego still wants to show God that I can think up a better solution to any of life's problems and that I am quite okay just as I am.

Meanwhile, that quiet voice **within** patiently whispers: *When you are in your Ego-Mind, you are **not** practicing Refinement. You are practicing Deception.*



This brings me back to the classroom-of-stones. Stones are being refined. We are being refined. Qi, The Universe, Holy Wisdom, Dao are constantly refining Creation. Nothing is static. All living-and-dead Matter is being refined in communities of stones, communities of seaweeds and sea turnips that have come ashore and in communities of creatures that have died alone on sandy beaches.

My big lesson is this: **Trying to refine in isolation is a very long and lonely process.** Refining in community—while at times uncomfortable, discordant and fatiguing—is such a varied and entertaining process that the energy and time spent tackling new challenges of refinement has become a welcome part of my life.

The New Age Christian Church & School is an excellent community in which to refine the Ego. And Qi—that Divine Life-Force Energy—is an especially gentle refiner of the Ego. I am very glad to be here refining among you and I thank you for listening to my words. **Amen.**





INTRODUCTION TO MY MEDITATIONS



I like to say there are as many kinds of meditation techniques as there are dandelions in the four small patches of land in my front yard. (*For more information I recommend Giovanni Dienstmann's Website: "Live and Dare: 23 Types of Meditation" . . .*) There are sitting meditations, walking meditations, standing meditations, lying-down meditations.

Why do people of all faiths meditate? What are the benefits of meditation?

When I meditate, I often ask for guidance because when I'm in that *within* zone, I'm far more receptive to Holy Wisdom's guidance—which She always gives me no matter how ordinary or how complex-and-vexing a problem of mine is.

For me, meditation brings me a sense of inner calm. For me, meditation centers me in myself and—with the aid of gravity—it plants my body firmly in Matter. For me, meditation helps me feel more comfortable in my human form. For me, meditation increases my ability to flow with the energies around me. And, lastly, for me, when I meditate I create more ways to be joyful and to make myself laugh.

The Guided Meditation is the technique with which I'm most familiar. I've experienced it both as the Guide standing at a church podium and as a congregant sitting in a church pew, being guided.

This meditation technique is a recent addition to the pantheon of meditation techniques. It came into its own during the Age of Aquarius because it is easy—even for a non-church-goer—to follow the Guide's simple verbal instructions that help ready the listener's mind-and-body to absorb the meditation.

For those of you who might like to combine meditative silence with occasional testifying, I recommend a traditional Quaker service. Congregants sit in silence until someone feels moved to speak. Because these spoken words come out of a devote silence, they can be revelatory and profound.

How **do** we become still? How do we shed the frantic energies of our multi-tasking lives and quiet the mind and calm the body? How do we physically and mentally prepare to meditate?

I think of my front yard, again, and all those dandelions. There are many, many ways to prepare to meditate; there is no single perfect technique.

Since there is no one perfect technique, I found myself enmeshed in an editorial dilemma. **Consistency.** Consistency seemed the best answer. But how was I going to bring consistency to the preparation phase when each meditation had its own integral process for “*Going Within*,” and how was I going to bring consistency to the exiting phase when each meditation had its own integral process for “*Returning to the Here-and-Now*?”

My solution: Each meditation has the same set of directives for ***Going Within*** and for ***Returning to the Here-and-Now***. As I typed these words, I felt the circular energy that gathers us together as we enter the meditative state and that bonds us together as we exit a meditation.

Shakers must have felt this same gathering and bonding energy during their worship time because they gave us words that perfectly capture this sense of communal harmony.

**Shaker Song ~ Elder Joseph Brackett ~ 1848**

‘Tis the gift to be simple,
‘Tis the gift to be free,
‘Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
‘Twill be in the garden of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain’d,
To bow and to bend we shan’t be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come ‘round right.



CONTINUITY



Introduction: I've been thinking about Continuity and about our small blue planet out here in the vastness of space. I've been thinking about the constancy of gravity—our cord to the earth's core—and about the depletion of oxygen and about the constancy of water, on which all living organisms depend.

I continue to marvel at how beautifully the natural elements of this planet work interdependently—living Matter and dead Matter—to support and sustain life on planet Earth?

We humans, whose bodies are 60% water, depend on fresh water. Rain that falls from the sky, rain in the form of sleet, rain in the form of hail, rain in the form of snow, rain in the form of ice brings us the fresh water we need to survive.

In spite of this, we cavalierly waste this blessed resource. During periods of drought, we drain irreplaceable water from the aquifer; to accommodate housing developments we bury our history and we divert rivers from their natural course turning fertile land into barren land; we destroy vital estuaries; we pollute our fresh water and our sea water with our toxic waste. And, still, water continues to be a life-sustaining resource—but for how long? Mother Nature has much to teach us about Continuity and survival.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. **(Repeat 3-times.)**

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. **(Be thorough.)**

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. **(Take your time.)** Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Now that you are relaxed and centered let your Mind's Eye look to the firmament. We are near the city of Seattle and tonight it is raining. Large drops of rain high in the sky are falling toward Earth.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to become a raindrop? Reach into the imagination of your inner mind; choose a droplet of rain; draw yourself into its cool, wetness; feel the joyous rush of air as you fall down, down, down to join hundreds and thousands and millions of raindrops, gathering together on the ground to form a large puddle.

As you merge together and the number of raindrops increases, your puddle becomes a pool of water and soon your pool becomes a meandering stream where you feel yourself brushing against tree roots, pebbles and fish.

As other streams converge, your stream grows wider and deeper until it becomes a rushing river. Here, huge boulders send you somersaulting into the air and plummeting back into the swift-flowing water until the river reaches a vast salty sea where you float, peacefully, with other raindrops until currents of humid air draw you back into the sky to await your next raindrop-journey.

Depending on where you land—in a desert, on an ice floe, in a rain forest, at the summit of a mountain or on a city street—your journey will be unique.

This “raindrop journey” is the perfect metaphor for the reincarnation journey each soul makes again and again and again.

Take a moment to reflect on your various experiences as a raindrop and know this **Truth**: It is Divine Energy that gathers every drop of rain into the Consciousness of Water and it is where you, too, as a drop of rain, become One with **The Source of all Water**.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



This evening, let's close this meditation by singing "**Peace Like River**."

PEACE LIKE A RIVER

arranged by CHARLES KING
and DAISY ROBINSON



The musical score consists of five staves of music for a single voice. The chords are indicated above the staves: F, F7, Bb, F, C7, F, G7, C7, Gm7, C7, F, F7, Bb, F, C7, F, C7, F. The lyrics are as follows:

I got peace like a river, I got peace like a river,
I got peace like a river in-a-my soul.
Well, I got peace like a river, I got peace like a river,
I got peace like a river in-a-my soul.

I got love like a river, I got love like a river,
I got love like a river in-a-my soul.
Well, I got love like a river, I got love like a river,
I got love like a river in-a-my soul.

I got joy like a river, I got joy like a river,
I got joy like a river in-a-my soul.
Well, I got joy like a river, I got joy like a river,
I got joy like a river in-a-my soul.

I got hope like a river, I got hope like a river,
I got hope like a river in-a-my soul.
Well, I got hope like a river, I got hope like a river,
I got hope like a river in-a-my soul.

A LUMINOUS MOMENT



Introduction: “To be or not to be—that is the question.” In the middle of one of our services in late September, these famous words written by Shakespeare—circa 1596—popped out of Charles King’s mouth, to which he added: “That’s **it** in a nutshell!” or words to that effect.

We congregants laughed and went on to sing another song. But I know and you know that Charles has a gift for provoking deep thoughts at the most unexpected moments. So, as I drove back from Bellevue to Ballard, I began to ponder these words: “To be or not to be”—and you know what? That **is** the question each of us must answer. Are we going to **be** true to ourselves? Are we going to **be** open to all the possibilities offered to us? Are we going to strive to **be** One-with-God? Then I asked myself: **What do I have to DO to simply BE?**

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. (**Repeat 3-times.**)

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. (**Be thorough.**)

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. (**Take your time.**) Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Someone, please begin to **OM**.

When we are at the center of **OM** there is no **past** guilt or rage or wounding to distract us. There is no fear of the **future** to distract us. There is only **Now** and the sound of **OM**. Join the **OM** and **listen**.

Breathe deeply and let the reverberations of **OM** carry you to the very core of your heart's connection with God's Mind—which is the seat of our Soul's everlasting Higher Self.

From this clear perspective, from this Mind we share with God, ask to be given a significant talisman from your **Past** in *this* lifetime.

Reflect for a moment on the talisman you've been given—and give thanks.

Again, from this holy place in God's Mind, ask to be given a significant talisman from your **Future** in *this* lifetime.

Reflect for a moment on the talisman you've been given—and give thanks.

And, again, as you join your mind with God's Mind, ask for the gift *to-be-able-to-recognize God-Signs* in your **Present** life.

Be open to receiving this gift—and give thanks.

It is **only** in the **Now** that we can fully **be**. Only when our mind-and-heart are connected with God's Mind can we know the **Truth** of who we **are** and the things we need to **do** to **be** all that we can **be**.

And since all **Time** is happening at the same **Time**—in the **Now**—it is only in the **Now** that we can **be One-with-God**.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



This evening I'd like to end the meditation with one of my favorite songs, "Sweep Over My Soul."

Sweep Over My Soul

Harry D. Clarke

Harry D. Clarke

1. Sweep o - ver my soul, Sweep o - ver my soul;
 2. Sweep out hate and fear, Sweep out hate and fear;
 3. Sweep in love and peace, Sweep in love and peace;
 4. Sweep in grace and joy, Sweep in grace and joy;

Come, gra - cious Spir - it, Sweep o - ver my soul.
 Come, gra - cious Spir - it, Sweep out hate and fear.
 Come, gra - cious Spir - it, Sweep in love and peace.
 Come, gra - cious Spir - it, Sweep in grace and joy.

GOING WITHIN THE CIRCLE



Introduction: On this 30th evening of June—with the second full moon this month bright in the night sky—I’ve brought you a message about God’s **circle**, that magnificent physical comforter that glorifies our earthly world.

Tonight, I’d like us to meditate on *going within* God’s holy circle. We came into this world within a circle. Except for the “walk-ins” among us—we entered this world-of-Matter from within the circle of our mother’s womb. It’s time to return to God’s womb; it’s time to mind-travel home.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. **(Repeat 3-times.)**

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. **(Be thorough.)**

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. **(Take your time.)** Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



With each breath, repeat after me a few of the many names for the Divine—**Ma, Da, God, Mary, Christ, Allah, Yahweh, Buddha, Krishna, Ma, Da, God.** Let these names fill your mind like the knelling of a deep, melodious bell.

When your mind is full-to-bursting, let the tolling repetition of these Divine names grow fainter and fainter until your mind is still and at peace.

Did you feel how focused your mind became as you repeated these holy names? Did you feel the power building as the names tolled again and again in your mind? Did you feel the repetition pulling you into the infinite circle of God's Loving-and-Divine Mind? Did you experience a sense of peace?

Did you know this same sublime sense of peace can come over you as you **do** the most mundane task?



When I was in my 40s I loved pulling weeds. I lived in a brownstone apartment in Brooklyn Heights; there weren't many weeds to pull in my 2nd floor apartment.

But a drive north brought me to Weston, Vermont and to Weston Priory where a small band of Benedictine brothers worked the land, raised sheep, created pieces of art, made recordings of their own God-inspired songs—and prayed.

They had a big garden with row-upon-row of vegetables. In between the rows of vegetables weeds thrived, lots and lots of weeds. It was here, at the priory, I could satiate my love of the repetitive task of pulling weeds.

I have a friend, Renée Tackett, who lives not far from me in Ballard. Besides kayaking and singing, Renée loves to detail vintage automobiles. In fact, she earns a living making grungy old cars—and new cars, too,—shine.



Is there a task you love to do because as you do it Time stops, your mind grows quiet and a sense of calm overtakes you?

Tasks, the most ordinary kinds of tasks we repeat again and again—if done with joy and with careful attention to detail—can prove to be mind-refreshing rather than mind-numbing.

These repetitive tasks can also be doorways to the very center of God-Consciousness where every moment of your life becomes its own work of art because it is being lived **within** God's holy Circle.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



I'd like to end tonight's meditation with the Shakers' song, "**Simple Gifts**."

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BEING ONE WITH THE EARTH



Introduction: I've been considering human history and earth history and I'm appalled at how far apart we've grown. There *was* a time when the earth was honored; there *was* a time when calendars were circles of standing stones; there *was* a time when plants and animals and people worked in harmony to teach, heal, and nourish one another. There *was* a time. What drove Mother Nature and humankind apart?

I asked Holy Wisdom and was given two words: *Dust* and *Dominion*.

Dust: In Genesis Chapter 2, Verse 7 we are told: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust *of* the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

God used plain old dirt to create mankind. When did we humans decide that dirt was so insignificant we'd pave over it no matter what forms of life lay beneath?

When did we revise our history and decide we did **not** come from Spirit?

Dominion: In Genesis Chapter 1, Verse 26 we are told: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

If all living things truly are God's creations, then God gave us a most sacred trust—to care-take His creations—including ourselves. When did we humans decide that "dominion over" gave us license to pillage and to destroy the Plant Kingdom, the Animal Kingdom—the very planet, itself—and with it, ourselves?

Was it during the Middle Ages, when our religious fears drove us to kill hundreds of thousands of healers, herbalists and shaman? Did we not comprehend that by killing these keepers of the mysteries of Mother Nature, these custodians of practical knowledge centered on ways to sustain Earth's resources, we would eventually kill ourselves?

We have forgotten that all forms of life—animal, vegetable, mineral—are imbued with an informed Consciousness that is directly connected to God, our Creator.

It is Time, as we join with other like-minded communities around the globe, to reawaken our love of Dust and to renew our sacred pledge to God to keep Dominion over His Earth with selfless wisdom and with love.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. (**Repeat 3-times.**)

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. (**Be thorough.**)

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. (**Take your time.**) Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Did you know—whether or not you believe we were first made from dust—we humans are unique among God's creations?

We are mostly salt water, although we need fresh water to survive. Our carapace is a covering of flexible flesh that holds together bones, tendons, cartilage and sinews. Our blood is our plant juice and our tree sap. Our hair is our fur, fish-scale and feather-covering. We breathe in oxygen. We breathe out carbon dioxide. We exchange this oxygen and carbon dioxide with trees. Our bodies can produce fungi and stones. And, we have learned how to survive in practically any environment.

That's pretty amazing! This life we've been given, having been born into Matter from the realm of Spirit, is a very special gift.

Why don't we see the connection? Why have we become oblivious to the **Truth** of our being? Why was humankind given Dominion over this planet?

God gave us Dominion over this planet because we humans have the capacity **to be empathic** with **every** form of life.

Haven't you imagined you were an animal? (Many Native American children are given an animal totem for protection.) Haven't you wrapped your arms around a giant tree and felt embraced by its energy? Haven't you, in dreams, imagined you were flying and had a bird's eye view of the world or that you were a breaching whale, taking in oxygen so you could close your spout hole and dive deep down into the black depths of the sea?

Now, with the spiritual sight of your Third Eye and using Holy Wisdom's powers-of-becoming, imagine you are a rock.

What kind of rock are you? Are you granite, red sandstone, shale, limestone or igneous?

How large a rock are you? Are you covered in lichen? Does moss grow in your crevices? Do tree-roots tunnel into you and through you? Are you covered in barnacles? Do gulls nest upon you?

What vistas do you over-look? Do you over-look mountains, meadows, forests, deserts, ice fields, lakes, streams, immense oceans?

Do you have a sense of growing old? Does the buffeting wind wear upon you? Do the alternating heat and cold of seasonal temperatures wear upon you? Does water wear upon you? If we humans would listen, what one **truth** would you share with us?

Breathe deeply and let the rock of yourself grow smaller and smaller until it transforms into a single cell in your human body.

God gave us earthly life and he connected us to **Him** by giving each of us a **soul**. Open your heart and your mind to your **true** essence. Let this **Truth** help you to have more respect for **Dust** and to honor your **Dominion** over planet Earth by being wiser more thoughtful care-takers of **His** creation.

Returning to the Here-and-Now

Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

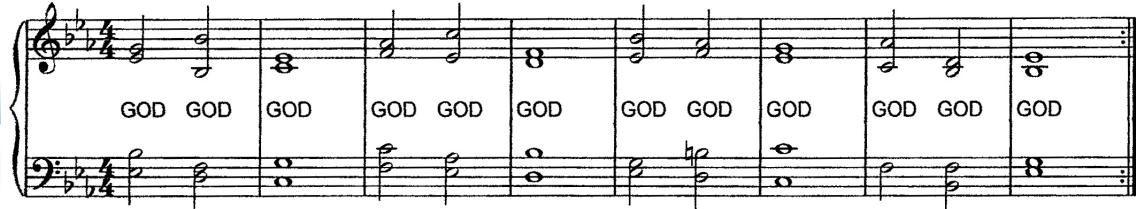
Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



Please sit and reflect for a moment, in silence.

Tonight, I'd like to end the meditation with "**The God Chant**."

THE GOD CHANT*



* Sung at Charles King's Musical Church for All People into the mid-1990's.

THE PRESENCE OF ANGELS



Introduction: When I was a kindergartener—this was back in 1941—I always looked forward to the quiet time just after lunch. Five days a week we five-year-olds would troop back from the cafeteria to find our large play-space magically transformed into an army barracks. Three rows of collapsible, khaki-colored canvas cots were waiting for us and upon each cot was our very own blanket-and-pillow.

After a trip to the bathroom, we'd lie down, close our eyes, and listen as our teacher read aloud to us. These were not the 32-page picture-book stories of today. What we listened to, what seeped into my mind, my heart, into the very marrow of my bones, was the lush language, the complex emotional characters, and the always ethical and moral plots of the classic fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen. *The Little Mermaid*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Match Girl*, and *The Emperor's New Clothes* were my favorites.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. (**Repeat 3-times.**)

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. (**Be thorough.**)

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. (**Take your time.**) Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Tonight, I want to tell you a true story about the presence of angels.

Back in the 1980s, in a large crowded city where the best of life and the worst of life flourished, young men began to die from a new and terrible plague. This plague was not contagious in the usual way and for a long time no one knew what caused it. What everyone *did* know was that once you got this plague you died. Medicines couldn't cure it, doctors were mystified and patients wasted away in agony while their loved ones watched in horror.

Now, in this city there was a very old and very beautiful stone church. Above the heavy wooden doors of this church, set into the stone, was a magnificent, round, stained glass window depicting a shepherd holding his crook in one hand and cradling a baby lamb in the other.

When you entered this place the noise and the frantic hustle of the city vanished and a gentle peace seemed to flow from the stones in the walls, from the flagstones in the floor and from the wood, itself. There were fifteen rows of hand-carved pews on either side of a wide center aisle. The wood of the pews smelled of Murphy's Oil Soap, and in each pew there was a long cushion covered in dark, wine-colored velvet that invited you to come, sit, rest, and pray.

Overhead, large wooden beams met at the top of the thirty-foot ceiling like inverted ribs of an ancient sailing ship. And, through a row of small windows set high in the walls, sunlight streamed in and dust particles danced. It was a heavenly place.

So it was not surprising that many of those who were sick with the plague found their way to this House-of-God where they were welcomed by an Episcopal priest who was gay and by a congregation whose many years in this diverse city had endowed them with an inordinate capacity for compassionate acceptance.

Here, in the company of these loving souls, pains of the body were briefly forgotten, shame of having the plague lessened and the kindness with which each newcomer was greeted brought a measure of comfort to all those who were sick.

Part of each service at the Church of the Good Shepherd was set aside for the ritual of healing which included anointing the forehead with oil and the laying-on of hands. There were always open arms to welcome those who were sick with the plague and tears of farewell for those who left this earth for the realm of Spirit.

Months passed. And as Death continued to take so many young men—and a few young women—the congregation felt the crushing weight of sorrow grow heavier and heavier upon them.

Then, one Sunday afternoon at the end of yet another sad memorial service, as the voices in the choir sent the soothing sounds of a sacred song wafting through the church, a small perfect white feather drifted down from the rafters and came to rest in the lap of the one who was burying his beloved partner.



Thereafter, at every memorial service, as the choir sang the Benediction, a single white feather would float down from on high and come to rest in the lap or at the feet of the one whose grief was greatest and who needed a sign that “All will be well.”

Little-by-little, the congregation of the Church of the Good Shepherd felt the heart of the community grow lighter and lighter and they marveled at the appearance of these feathers—because there were no birds in the rafters of this church.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



After one particularly sorrowful service for Jason Wright, a friend of mine, I was privileged to be given these channeled words from Holy Wisdom to sing.



Angels watch over our coming in.

Angels watch over our going out.

Angels watch over us when we're awake.

Angels watch over us while we sleep.

**We are forever in the presence of angels,
keeping their vigilant watch over us.**



What better song to conclude this meditation than, “**All Day, All Night.**”

All Night, All Day

Traditional American

1
E C[#]m E B⁷ E A E
All night, all day An - gels watch-in' ov - er me my Lord

5
E C[#]m E B⁷ E B⁷ E
All night, all day An - gels watch - in' ov - er me

9
E C[#]m7 G[#]7 C[#]m7 A E A
1. Day is dy - ing in - the west An - gels watch-in' ov - er me my Lord
2. As I lay me down to sleep An - gels watch-in' ov - er me my Lord
3. If I die be - fore I wake An - gels watch-in' ov - er me my Lord
4. If I live for - ev - er and a day An - gels watch-in' ov - er me my Lord

13
E C[#]m7 G[#]7 C[#]m7 E/B B⁷ E
Sleep, my child and take your rest An - gels watch - in' ov - er me
Pray the lord my soul to keep An - gels watch - in' ov - er me
Pray the Lord my soul to take An - gels watch - in' ov - er me
Pray He'll guard my soul al - ways An - gels watch - in' ov - er me

17
E C[#]m E B⁷ E A E
All night, all day An - gels watch-in' ov - er me my Lord

21
E C[#]m E B⁷ E B⁷ E
All night, all day An - gels watch - in' ov - er me



Thoughts upon Waking

Enter each day
giving thanks;
Enter each day
open to insight;
Enter each day
prepared to change;
Enter each day
willing to wait;
Enter each day
with kindness to self;
Enter each day
with kindness to others;
**Then let each day
just be.**

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OUR MOTHER-GOD, MARY



Introduction: “Glory to God in the highest and on Earth Peace to all men,” proclaimed a multitude of heavenly hosts

The culmination of Christmas is the celebration of the virgin birth of a baby boy in a lowly stable in Bethlehem. There are oxen and donkeys—beasts of the field—munching on hay.

It is nighttime and shepherds leave their flocks, unprotected, to bear witness to this curious birth in a nearby stable.

There are three Kings, who veer off their normal desert trade route to follow an unusually bright star in the East. When they arrive directly under the star, they find a humble stable and a woman whose name is Mary, cradling her newborn baby boy she’s just wrapped in swaddling cloth. Joseph, her husband, is close by. The baby who will be called Jesus—or Yeshua in Hebrew—radiates an unearthly glow which moves the Kings to offer him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Whether or not the biblical details of Jesus’s birth are historically accurate is irrelevant; these details have been passed down, unchanged, through the centuries to Christians around the world.

What I’ve been pondering are the specific words of the angelic proclamation: “Glory to God in the highest and on Earth Peace to all men.” I’ve been wondering if these words carried a deeper meaning. Tonight, I’d like to share Holy Wisdom’s answer.



**Jehovah, God-the-Father,
Mary, God-the-Mother,
Jesus, God-the-Son,
Holy Beings from on high
come to earth
to teach us to be One Within.**



Throughout Advent these words have sung themselves in my head. When I asked Holy Wisdom what message they contained, this is what She said: *In order for humankind to achieve “peace on earth” each soul needs to balance and to honor the masculine and the feminine energy **within**.*

In other words all the fear-based, power-based and belief-based sexual transgressions that we have engaged in since the Garden of Eden must end and the frictions that exist between males and females must find a way to work together, in harmony, for there to be “Peace on Earth.”

Further, Holy Wisdom revealed that Mary was **not** “meek and mild.” Mary was a God-Being in perfect gender balance and Jesus was a God-Being in perfect gender balance. And that each of us, though human, can achieve gender wholeness by making peace with the energy of our Father Sky and the energy of our Mother Earth.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. **(Repeat 3-times.)**

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. **(Be thorough.)**

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. **(Take your time.)** Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Here's a simple exercise that can help balance the male and female energies **within**.

Rub your hands together, briskly. Keep rubbing your hands—as I talk—until you feel heat flowing from the center of both palms.

In Chinese medicine, the right side of the body carries Yang Qi or male energy while the left side of the body carries Yin Qi or female energy. To bring balance **within** we must mix, equally, the energy of the male and the energy of the female.

Part 1—Men, place your **left** hand, palm-down, over your heart—leave a little space between your palm and your heart.

Women, place your **right** hand, palm down, over your heart—leave a little space between your palm and your heart.

Breathe deeply and send the healing Light of Holy Spirit, streaming into the back of the hand that is over your heart.

Part 2—Men, place your **right** hand, palm down, over your **left** hand.

Women, place your **left** hand, palm down, over your **right** hand.

Breathe deeply and send the healing Light of Holy Spirit streaming into the backs of both hands.

Part 3—This is where we merge the Yang Qi of the male with the Yin Qi of the female.

Keeping your hands one-above-the-other over your heart, rotate both hands in a slow circle—left-to-right, **clockwise, 3-times**. Let your elbows rise a little. **Soften** your arms and hands as you make these slow circles over your heart.

Rest a moment, breathe deeply and send **Thoughts-of-Love** into the backs of both hands, through your palms and into your heart.

Reverse the Motion. Rotate both hands in a slow circle from right-to-left, **counterclockwise, 3-times**.

Now, **rotate** both hands in a slow circle from left-to-right, clockwise over your heart.

Repeat Part 3, in its entirety, 3-more times. *Always end Part 3 with your hands rotating clockwise.*

When you have completed this exercise, relax and breathe deeply. Continue to hold your hands over your heart. Can you feel your female and male energy making peace with each other? If you need more male energy, call on Jesus. If you need more female energy, call on Mary.

You will know when the mix is just right because you will feel in harmony, in balance and whole. This is the path to becoming One *within*. This is the “peace” the angelic hosts were proclaiming.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



To keep with the spirit of Advent, let's end this meditation singing: “**Silent Night**.”

Silent Night

Franz Gruber

The musical score for "Silent Night" consists of three staves of music. The first staff (C major) contains the lyrics "Si - lent night, Ho - ly night! Si - lent night, Ho - ly night! Si - lent night, Ho - ly night!" The second staff (G7) contains "All is calm, all is bright. Shep - herds quake at love's pure sight. Son of God light." The third staff (F) contains "Round yon Vir - gin, Moth - er and Child. Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far. Ra - diant beams from Thy Ho - ly face." The score concludes with a final staff (G7) containing "Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild, Heav'n - ly hosts sing Al - le - lu - ia, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace," followed by a final staff (C) containing "Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Christ the Sav - ior is born! Je - sus Lord, at Thy birth." The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words on separate lines and others on the same line as the note heads.

IN PRAISE OF FEET



Introduction: Jesus said: “If you are not able to do the thing which is *least*, why bother to think about the rest?” And Jesus said: “He that is faithful in that which is *least* is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the *least* is unjust also in much.”

I’ve been thinking about these words and how they might apply to the most intimate and moving ritual that is reenacted in monasteries, priories and churches throughout Christendom during Easter Week.

I’ve been thinking about Jesus bathing the feet of his disciples and saying to them: “Now that I, **your** Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”

Jesus understood the significance of feet. Our feet—if healthy—allow us to stand upright, to climb to the tops of tall trees and to climb the sheer face of cliffs. They allow us to walk on cobblestone, on sand, on dirt, on grass, and on cement-and-asphalt roads. Why is this important? For many of us, feet are often our **only** means of transportation.

Jesus knew in what low esteem we hold feet—far too lowly for them to be anointed with the costly oil of spikenard. He knew how much our feet suffer from neglect. He knew feet were a part of our body to which we pay the *least* attention.

I’m not talking to those of you who take your feet, regularly, to pedicure salons and have your toenails soaked, dried, filed and painted.

I’m talking about toenails we let grow until they become talons; I’m talking about ignored toenail fungus; I’m talking about an infected puncture wound from stepping-on-a-nail; I’m talking about untreated fractures in the bones of our toes;

I'm talking about unaddressed splinters and the many problems of flat feet; I'm talking about plantar fascia tears that lead to broken bones in the arches of our feet; I'm talking about neglected bunions, warts, and blisters. When these ills befall our feet—then we pay attention. Otherwise, we pay them no mind at all.

So, on this Easter night, I'd like to offer a meditation in praise of feet because all parts of our bodies need to be loved and honored, equally.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. (**Repeat 3-times.**)

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. (**Be thorough.**)

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. (**Take your time.**) Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Sitting before me is a dear friend. She has come to wash my feet and trim my toenails. Yes, I have such a friend. She's a chiropodist who tends to the badly neglected feet of the elderly in all manner of care-facilities in and around Seattle. She's come to me because I've just had a heart attack and I need her help trimming my toenails.

Cecily Flavell spreads a square plastic cloth on my living room carpet. She has brought a pink plastic pan. She goes to my kitchen and fills a quarter of the pan with warm soapy water. When she returns, I put my right foot into the water, first.

There, kneeling before me, my friend gently washes my feet, dries them with a soft towel and trims each toenail, paying close attention to the details of each nail. She is one-of-two chiropodists in this area permitted to work on the feet of diabetics.

And I think of Jesus washing the sandaled feet of His disciples—knowing as my friend knows—that feet are the *least* of our concerns.

Now imagine that the person sitting on a stool, bending over to wash your feet is **you**. (*Make the washing of your feet a sacred ritual.*) Spread a piece of plastic on your living room floor; choose a bowl that is just the right size and shape into which to place one-foot-at-a-time. Next, get a pitcher of water, a soapy sponge and a soft towel and place these items next to the bowl.

As you take your time washing your feet, can you feel the weariness leave them? Can you feel how they have longed for your attention? Your feet, having kept you connected to the earth and faithfully carried you where ever you needed to go, deserve to be noticed and cared-for.

After you've washed your feet and used the soft towel to dry them, you may want to massage an ointment—such as New Feet—into the soles of your feet. Send love and appreciation to your feet. Honor your feet. Feet are precious.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



Tonight, in honor of our feet, Awilda will sing: **“How Beautiful Are the Feet”** from *Handel’s “Messiah.”*

Nº38. - AIR FOR SOPRANO

“HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THEM”

Romans x:15
Larghetto (♩ = 104)

How beau-tiful are the feet of them that
preach the gos-pel of peace, how beau-tiful are the feet, how
beau-tiful are the feet of them that preach the gos-pel of peace,
how beau-tiful are the feet of them that

A

preach the gos-pel of peace, and bring glad ti - dings, and

bring glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of good things, and

B
bring glad ti - dings, glad tidings of good things, and bring glad tidings, glad

ti - dings of good things, glad tidings of good things!

THE REALITIES OF BEING ONE SPIRIT



Introduction: Winters in Seattle, my eyes turn, by day, toward dark cloudy skies and flights of crows. By night, they turn toward stars, the moon and the twinkling lights of airplanes. In many places on planet Earth springtime is fast approaching. It's the end of January and the beginning of February in the Northwest and Mother Nature's juices are rising.

The landscape is still dressed in its winter palette. The grays of barren tree branches and the dark browns-and-blacks of rain-soaked soil are the colors of Earth-at-rest. Only evergreens, moss and the thin new shoots of grass are green.

Then, overnight, Mother Nature's Divine Energy makes Her presence known as She births dense clusters of green spears that have thrust their way upward from deep-buried bulbs until the pale tips of their heads poke through the mud.

In a week or two, lush profusions of daffodil, crocus, iris, snowdrop and hellebore paint the neighborhood. My eyes are dazzled.

In my backyard I take time to admire the delicate white florets of a small camellia bush and the opening blossoms of my pink tulip magnolia—she will have no leaves until May.

The juices in me are rising, too. The four small patches of dirt in my front yard have come alive with daffodil and crocus; hostas will emerge later as will the feathery green leaves of a mature ravishing Japanese maple.

Then I am called into the private sparsely-planted sacred space that is my backyard to weed, cut-back the ferns, fertilize, and turn the soil. Here, too, mature hostas will flourish late in the spring.

And, always, I am watched-over by a nine-foot totem pole carved in the Haida tradition by Ambrose Silver.

My sense of smell has yearned for the scent of flowering lilac trees and my eyes feast on the vivid colors of an early blooming rhododendron's deep purple flowers and the small blue flowers on an azalea bush.

As I dig in the dirt, I reflect on the miracle of all this beauty and all this bounty created through God's infinite grace and by Mother Nature's infinite generosity. That each of us is part of the charismatic energy of this **One** great **God-Source** is inexplicable.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. **(Repeat 3-times.)**

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. **(Be thorough.)**

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. **(Take your time.)** Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Would it surprise you to know that the World Wide Web is working—whether its inventors intended this or not—to guide us out of the “cloud” and back to Mother Earth? This miracle of technological communication is helping us become One Spirit. Breathe deeply and let the hum of humanity on the Internet fill you.

At the center of this humming is a deep Silence and an everlasting Stillness, guiding us to become One with each other and one with our Creator.

This relatively new invention of the Internet, because it is a teenager, makes many messes and many costly mistakes. And, like a teenager, it’s causing a multitude of distractions and disruptions; it often makes humankind make very bad decisions.

But as shocking as it may seem, coming from me, I’m here tonight to bring you this message. The Internet is Holy Wisdom’s most audacious classroom. So many human experiences of fear, rage, betrayal, lust, longing, bigotry, greed, injustice, love and faith—long kept secret—are finally surfacing. Holy Wisdom knows that for humankind to become One Spirit—which is the everlasting **Truth** of our existence—there needs to be a way we can all be connected, making it possible for all of us to tell our stories and be heard. The World Wide Web can make this necessary connection a reality.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



Tonight, I've been given a poem whose simple words reflect **The Realities of Being One Spirit**.



**We are the heat of the sun.
We are the light of the moon.
We are the salt of the sea.
We are the dust of the earth.
We are the All-in-One.
We are the One-in-All.
We are One Holy everlasting Spirit.
Amen, Alleluia, Amen.**

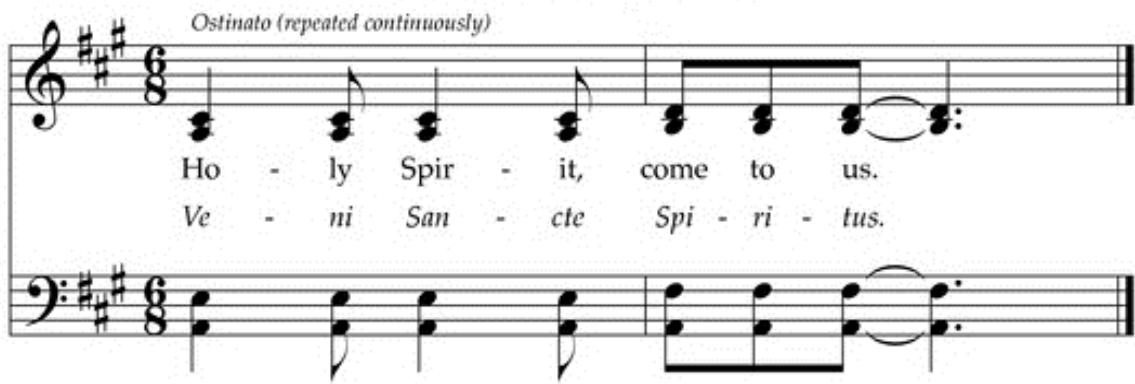


I'd like to end our meditation with a chant from the monks of Taizé, France. **“Holy Spirit, Come to Us.”**

Holy Spirit, Come to Us

Veni Sancte Spiritus

Ostinato (repeated continuously)



Ho - ly Spir - it, come to us.
Ve - ni San - cte Spi - ri - tus.

Like many other chants from the ecumenical monastic community at Taizé, France, this brief text is intended for repeated singing by the congregation while a soloist or choir sings a longer related text. These refrains often use Latin to avoid connection with any current nation.

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MEETING YOUR PERSONAL SHADOW



Introduction: On a cold, gray evening in late October of 1995, I had an encounter with **Evil**, here, in the parking lot of our very own New Age Christian Church & School.

Months later this encounter with Evil still echoes in my Ego and throughout my body. But I am, thankfully, in a place where I can look back and see that this encounter was giving me an opportunity to transform.

There was something about me I needed to transform in a hurry. It was this: *Whenever you meet an opposing force-field with equal intensity, Holy Wisdom cautioned, you will be pulled into the vortex of that force-field, and you will be wounded.*

It wasn't the enemy "out there" I needed to worry about; it was the arrogance of my own Ego that had me firmly believing there was no negative force—not even **Evil**—I could not conquer. Pogo said it best: "I've found the enemy and the enemy is **us**."

We all have a shadow-self; it's part of the Ego. What can we **do** to make positive changes to our personal **Shadow**?

With this question upper-most in our mind, I'd like to take us on a gentle journey deep inside ourselves so that we can more fully understand the dynamics of our personal **Shadow**.

I've often taken this journey on my own and I've also been the guide. When we meet an aspect of our shadow-self, there is always this commonality to the

experience: the initial form our **Shadow** takes is never its true form; it most often represents an all-too-familiar quality we don't much like about ourselves. (For me it would be my demanding, need-to-be-in-control bossy self.)

Sometimes it happens that your **Shadow** takes in a deceased friend or relative. These souls are needy, earth-bound spirits who may be the cause of some of your negative thoughts and actions—even some of your food allergies.

Please, do **not** be distressed. These souls are lost. A loving guide from Spirit—if you ask for one—can lead this soul out of your body and to its appropriate realm in heaven. And be assured this unusual scenario is rare.

It is you and you alone who must take ownership of your **Shadow**. That said, in spite of its negative essence, our shadow-self is Holy, too.

Going Within



Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. (**Repeat 3-times.**)

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. (**Be thorough.**)

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. (**Take your time.**) Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



As you sit here in this peaceful silence, let the words: “*Holy Spirit, Come to Me*” repeat in your mind and in your heart.

Now, imagine there is a column of bright, golden light just above your head. Breathe deeply, and as you inhale, draw this Light in through the crown of your head. **Don’t forget to exhale.** Take another deep breath and let this golden Light flood every cell in your body. Rest a moment in this Light.

Way back in 1966 there was a movie called, *Fantastic Voyage*. It was a marvelous sci-fi thriller. The plot: doctors were miniaturized in order to travel inside the body of a famous scientist to save his life. I mention this film, because as our journey begins we, too, will become miniaturized for a short time.

Open your mind to optimal magic. Inside your head just behind your eyes in the cavity of your mind, you will find a clear crystal ball. This crystal ball will act as an elevator and its door is open; it is waiting for you to step inside. You can see railings to hold on to and places for you to sit.

But before the door to the crystal ball closes and before we embark on this journey, I find it reassuring to invite a few of my favorite spirit-guardians and protectors to be by my side.

Please, each of you call-forth three or more of your special guardians to join you in this crystal-ball elevator.

Be patient. Give each entity a chance to materialize, fully. These beings may appear in a recognizable physical form or they may appear as sparkling lights or you may see nothing at all, but you will be able to feel their loving presence. And when we have all assembled, take a moment to thank your guardians for their companionship. As we step inside the clear crystal ball **we will become miniaturized.**

Once inside, breathe, deeply. Our breathing is the motor for this crystal-ball elevator. As you inhale—in unison—the ball hovers; as you exhale—in unison—the crystal ball slowly descends down through the middle of your body.

Inhale and exhale in unison until the crystal ball reaches the bottom of its descent, and stops.

This is where your Unconscious resides. This cave-like space **is** your **Shadow**.

The door in the crystal ball stands open.

Let your curiosity give you courage to step out of the crystal ball and into your **Shadow**; your spirit-guardians are with you. They will give you their unconditional support.

Look around you. How big a space is it? Is there a source of light? Run your hands along the walls. What are the walls made of? Is the air hot or cold, damp or dry? Are there familiar odors you smell and recognize? Do you see any familiar furnishings or objects? Walk around and explore this cavern. Breathe deeply and allow your heart to open to this place.

There is a special entity that lives here. This entity is very old and very wise and its only mission is to be of help to you. This spirit-entity serves your **Shadow** and it has been waiting a long time to meet you.

Don't be anxious. There is nothing for you to fear—not even yourself. This is a holy place. It is a place where your innermost secrets are known. It is a place where you no longer have to hide your true self or to feel guilt or shame. It is a place where every aspect of you is understood and loved.

Breathe deeply and call forth the Servant-of-your-**Shadow**. Take another deep breath and open your heart and mind to this holy being.

Study the energy of this being. Do you recognize the form it has assumed? This entity is an essential part of **you**. It holds the answers to your fears, to the obstacles in your life and to the areas where you hold your resistance.

Is there a painful burden you've been carrying most of your life? Would you like some insight concerning this burden?

Ask your question, now. **Wait and listen**. The answer may come in the form of a thought; it may come as frames in a motion picture; it may come as words. If

you don't understand the answer to your question, open your heart-and-mind—wider—and ask, again.

If you still don't receive an answer, don't be discouraged. Communicating with the Servant-of-your-**Shadow** takes practice. It takes a willingness to trust in the process and it takes a quiet, receptive mind open to God's **Truth**. Breathe deeply and relax.

It's time to leave the domain of your Unconscious. But before you and your spirit-guardians step back into the crystal ball and ascend into your Conscious Mind, give thanks to the Servant-of-your-**Shadow**.

As you inhale a big breath, you will start the motor of the crystal ball. **Don't forget to exhale!**

As you inhale—in unison—the crystal-ball elevator will begin its ascent. Continue to inhale and exhale, in unison, and soon you will arrive back in the cavity of your Conscious Mind.

Give thanks to your spirit-guardians for their faithful, loving company and **always** end a spiritual journey by blessing yourself.

As you exit the clear crystal ball, open your mind to everyday magic and you will no longer be miniaturized.

Know this: Your crystal ball elevator is always there behind your eyes, waiting to take you back to the cavern of your **Shadow** where you may ask as many questions as you want and receive more and deeper insights from the Servant-of-your-**Shadow**. All of you are quite capable of making this journey on your own. And so it is.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



Tonight, let's close our meditation with "**Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying.**"

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves are in common time and key signature of B-flat major. The lyrics are integrated into the music, appearing below the notes. The first section of lyrics is: "Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;". The second section of lyrics is: "Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace." The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some sustained notes and rests.

Text: Ken Medema. b. 1943. Music: Ken Medema. b. 1943. © 1973 Hope Publishing Co.

SILENCE



Introduction: I have a favorite chair; it's a little child's square, wood-slatted chair. It was abandoned in an alleyway in Brooklyn Heights. I carried it home, sanded it and painted it Norwegian Blue.

I'm short-and-round and sitting on Yoga cushions with my legs crossed is much too painful. The height of ordinary folding chairs leaves my feet dangling. But this child's chair, being low to the ground, gives my body the support it needs.

Years ago, back in Brooklyn, I told the Naturopathic doctor I was seeing about this child's chair. He asked if I would bring it to my next session so he could see me sitting on it. I brought it in, sat on it and was pleasantly surprised by my doctor's overwhelming approval. He said: "Your chair not only perfectly aligns your spine, it lets the energy flow—without the usual mid-section blockage—from your torso right down to the soles of your feet. You've found a real treasure."

Here's how I sit on my chair. My back is straight and my buttocks are pressed firmly into the horizontal back slats. I cherish this blue, portable child's chair. It has even traveled on airplanes because it has become indispensable to me whenever I have to sit for long periods of time.

The last time I sat here at Musical Church in front of you on my blue child's chair, we went in search of the *quiet within*. And we practiced getting quiet.



I'm sitting in front of you, again, on my blue child's chair, but tonight I'd like us to consider the greatest quiet of all—Silence.

Going Within

Sit comfortably in an upright position.

Legs are a shoulder's width apart.

Feet are firmly planted on the ground.

Hands are resting on your thighs, **palms up**.

Eyes, slowly, close.

Inhale, deeply, through your nose.

Release the breath, slowly, through your mouth. (**Repeat 3-times.**)

Relax your body, part-by-part, beginning with the-crown-of-your-head and ending with the-soles-of-your-feet. (**Be thorough.**)

Still your mind. Imagine yourself watching sand in the top-half of an hourglass slowly spilling into the bottom-half of the hourglass. (**Take your time.**) Watch all the grains of sand empty from the top half and fill the bottom half of the hourglass.

Invite the Light of Holy Spirit to stream into you from every direction, filling all the cells of your body.

Guide the Light in a downward flow. Do you **feel** it heating your entire body? **Guide** the Light out through your anal opening and through the soles of your feet. **Send** the Light seven feet into the earth.



Invisible Silence—everything and nothing in perfect harmony—is one of God’s most transcendent triumphs. God’s Silence is even more silent than “the music of the spheres.”

Like the force of a fierce wind, the Stillness-of-Silence bends the Mind, stripping away our avoidance of change.

Like the thunderous pounding of a waterfall, the Stillness-of-Silence keeps wearing away the inauthentic parts of our personal mythologies until these erroneously-perceived histories we tell ourselves and others become tiny grains of sand that our tears-of-understanding will one day wash away, leaving us with a more honest sense of self.

Like the raging heat of a forest fire, the Stillness-of-Silence burns through our Earth-Mind, reducing our destructive beliefs, ambitions, actions and thoughts until they are ash.

In the cleansing power of God’s Silence we come into His presence newly dedicated to a life of unconditional Love for Him and for ourselves; we make it our business to be more tolerant and more accepting of others, and we find ourselves thirsting for more of God’s **Truth**.

Take a moment to breathe deeply and draw the Stillness-of-God’s-Silence into your mind. Take another moment to breathe deeply and draw the soft cloak of God’s Silence around you—and be still.

Returning to the Here-and-Now



Listen. A round palm-sized bell is ringing, sweetly. (**Listen.**)

Inhale, slowly, through your nose.

Release your breath, quickly, through your mouth.

(Repeat 3-times.)

Move your **hands** up to your eyes.

Massage your eyes gently with your **fingertips**.

Open your eyes, slowly.

Turn your head left then right.

Observe the details of your surroundings.

Feel the wooden pew bench beneath your bottom.

Stand, slowly.

Shake-out your legs. (**Be deliberate.**)

Shake-out your shoulders, arms and hands. (**Be deliberate.**)

Arch your back like a cat.

Bend forward and **Stretch-out** your entire spine.

Stand, once again, as fully upright as you are able.

Greet the person on your left with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Greet the person on your right with a smile and a handshake. (Hugs are optional.)

Stay Standing (if you are able) **or Sit**: Meditations will end with a song, a channeled message or both.



Let's sit for a short time in silence. . . . **Amen.**

I'd like to end tonight's meditation with two offerings: the **first** offering is a channeled poem given to me by Holy Wisdom to help me become more comfortable within the stillness of God's Silence.

Here I Am, Lord



Here I am, Lord,
here I am.
Silent and waiting, Lord,
here I am.

Unlock the chains, Lord
that bind my mind.
Unlock the chains
that bind my mind.

Here I am, Lord,
here I am.
Silent and waiting, Lord,
here I am.

Soften the wall, Lord,
that guards my heart.
Soften the wall,
that guards my heart.

Here I am, Lord,
here I am.
Silent and waiting, Lord,
here I am.

Help me to heal, Lord,
my bodily ills.
Help me to heal;
Help me be whole.

Here I am, Lord,
here I am.
Silent and waiting, Lord,
here I am.

The second ending is our singing “Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place.”

2

For June Bottweg

Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place

For S.A.B. Voices and Piano Accompaniment

Based on Gen. 28:10-17

Choral Setting by JACK SCHRADER

Words and Music by
LANNY WOLFE*Smoothly (♩ = 72)*

Piano

5 S.A. Unison
mp

Sure - ly the pres-ence of the Lord is in this place; I can
mp B.

10 p

feel his might-y pow-er and his grace. I can
opt. 8va.... pp

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20

hear the brush of an - gels' wings.

p <

(8va)

I see glo-ry on each face;

12 12 *mp*

sure - ly the pres - ence of the Lord is in this place.

mp

mf div.

30

Sure - ly the pres-ence of the Lord is in this place: I can

mf

mf

4 2 1 3

Surely the Presence

grace. *unis. mp*

feel his might-y power and his grace, his grace. I can

grace.

35

hear the brush of an-gels' wings.

mp — *mf*

I see glo - ry on each face;

40

sure - ly the pres - ence of the Lord is in this place.

p

Surely the Presence



About the Author



Photo by JonLee Joseph

My lifelong love affair with words began with the small, beautifully illustrated books of Beatrix Potter. The series of her books beloved by generations of children, were an anomaly. Ms. Potter's vocabulary choices—often written about and commented on as not being child-friendly—were thrilling to my three-year-old ears, even if the meaning of certain words escaped me.

Imagine the unhappy transition I found myself in when the words and charming stories in Beatrix Potter's books were replaced by the incredibly boring words and unimaginative plots educators produced when they created the *Dick and Jane* basal readers. In my father's boyhood, children learned to read from the William Holmes McGuffey primers. But by the 1940s-and-50s *Dick and Jane* were the only textbooks used in public and private schools to teach 1st graders how to read.

Because I was dyslexic—Dyslexia being an undiagnosed impairment back in the 40s—learning to read seemed impossible. *Dick and Jane* did not help.

My saving grace? I had parents, born in the late 1800s, who were book-people and enjoyed reading aloud to each another. Of course, I loved to be read-to, too. My father was a superb out-loud reader and, listening to him read, I developed an ear for the music that words in well-written sentences made. Sentences in books by Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle and A. A. Milne sang in my ears and their complicated plots captivated my attention.

Learning to read with *Dick and Jane* was an utter failure. I never did learn to read in a conventional way. I was 12 when I chanced upon a spaciously designed copy of Jack London's *Call of the Wild* and began, spontaneously, to read it. At last the vivid word-paintings on the page translated into picture-images in my head and I experienced, for the first time, the overwhelming joy of being able to read.

This sudden ability to read was Holy Wisdom's doing, no doubt. How else to explain that from such an inauspicious beginning, I went on to become a Fiction Editor in the Junior Book Department at McGraw-Hill? There, I eagerly embraced the New York Board of Education's enthusiastic movement to introduce trade books—such as Arnold Lobel's *Toad and Frog* series—as an alternative means of teaching children *how to read*. This led, eventually, to public schools across the country abandoning the *Dick and Jane* and, later, *Juan and Juanita* readers.

July of 2016 I turned 80. I live a heaven-blessed life in Seattle, Washington.

Benediction

So many loving hearts,
so many loving minds,
so many loving hands
must join together
and stay together to
make a dream come true.

Bless these loving hearts,
bless these loving minds,
and
bless these loving hands.

Amen.



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Sourcing Holy Wisdom: Through Sermons and Meditations



by
Leigh Dean